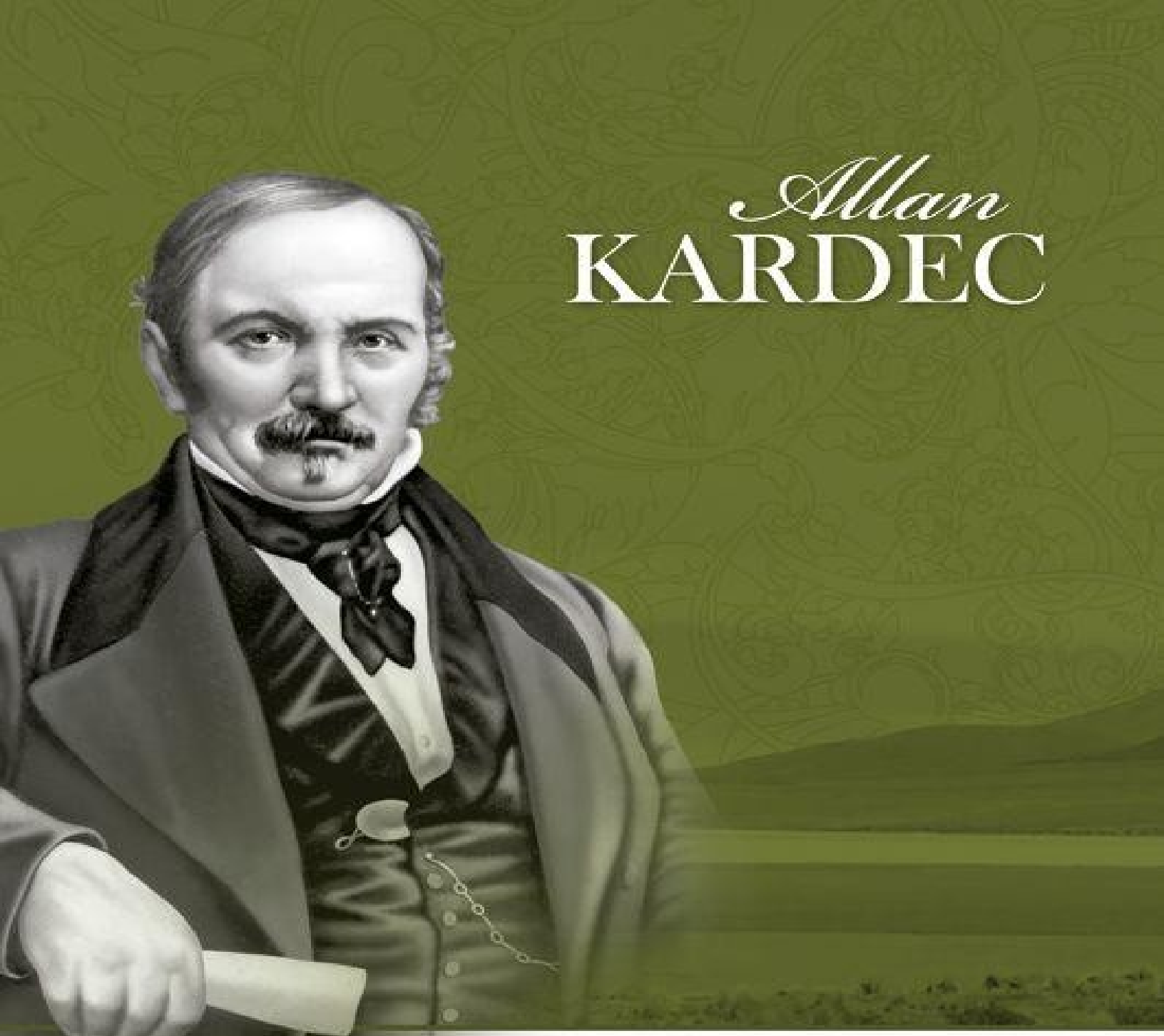

Allan
KARDEC

GENESIS

MIRACLES AND PREDICTIONS ACCORDING TO SPIRITISM

Table of Contents

Introduction
PART ONE
Genesis
Chapter I
Character of the Spiritist revelation
Chapter II
God
Chapter III
Good and evil
Chapter IV
The role of science in Genesis
Chapter V
Ancient and modern world theories
Chapter VI
General uranography
Chapter VII
A geological sketch of the earth
Chapter VIII
Theories about the earth
Chapter IX
The transformations of the globe
Chapter X
The organic Genesis
Chapter XI
The spiritual Genesis
Chapter XII
The Mosaic Genesis
PART TWO
Miracles
Chapter XIII
Characteristics of miracles
Chapter XIV
The fluids
Chapter XV
Miracles in the Gospel
PART THREE
Predictions
Chapter XVI
The theory of foreknowledge
Chapter XVII
Predictions in the Gospel
Chapter XVIII
The time has come

Explanatory Note

Genesis

Genesis

MIRACLES AND PREDICTIONS

According to spiritism

By

Allan Kardec

THE SPIRITIST DOCTRINE IS THE RESULT OF THE COLLECTIVE AND CONCORDANT TEACHING OF THE SPIRITS.SCIENCE IS CALLED UPON TO PRESENT GENESIS IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE LAWS OF NATURE. GOD PROVES GOD'S GREATNESS AND POWER BY IMMUTABILITY AND NOT BY THE SUSPENSION OF THE DIVINE LAWS. FOR GOD, THE PAST AND THE FUTURE ARE THE PRESENT.

Copyright © 2009 by
INTERNATIONAL SPIRITIST COUNCIL
Brasilia (DF) – Brazil
All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced by any mechanical, photographic, or electronic process, or in the form of a phonographic recording; nor may it be stored in a retrieval system, transmitted, or otherwise be copied for public or private use without prior permission of the publisher.
ISBN: 978-85-98161-78-5
ISBN (ePub version): 978-85-7945-116-4
Original French Title:
LA GENÈSE, LES MIRACLES ET LES PRÉDICTIONS SELON LE SPIRITISME
(Paris, 1868)
Translated by Darrel W. Kimble and Ily Reis
Cover design by: Luciano Carneiro Holanda
Digital version (ePub): Rones Lima
Edition of International Spiritist Council
SGAN Q. 909 – Conjunto F
70790-090 – Brasilia (DF) – Brazil
www.edicei.com
edicei@edicei.com
+55 61 3038 8400
International data for cataloging in publication (ICP)
K18 Kardec, Allan, 1804-1869.
Genesis : miracles and predictions according to spiritism[electronic resource] / by Allan Kardec ; [translated by Darrel W. Kimble and Ily Reis]. – Electronic Data – Brasilia :International Spiritist Council, 2011.
552 p. ; 21 cm
Translated from: La Genèse, les miracles et les prédictionsselon le spiritisme
978-85-98161-78-5
ISBN 978-85-7945-116-4 (ebook)
1. Jesus Christ – Spiritists Interpretations. 2. Spiritism. I. International Spiritism Council. II. Title.
CDD 133.9
CDU 133.7

Introduction to the first edition, published in January 1868

This new work is one more step forward regarding the consequences and applications of Spiritism. As its title indicates, its objective is the study of three areas that have until today been diversely interpreted and commented upon: *Genesis*, *miracles* and *predictions,* and how they relate to the new laws that have resulted from the observation of spirit phenomena.

Two elements, or, if you will, two forces govern the universe: the spiritual element and the material element. From the simultaneous action of these two principles special phenomena are born that would be inexplicable if one of these two elements were excluded, just as the formation of water would be inexplicable if we excluded one of its two constituent elements: oxygen and hydrogen.

By demonstrating the existence of the spirit world and its relations with the material world, Spiritism provides the key to a multitude of misunderstood phenomena, which, for that very reason, have been regarded as unbelievable by a certain class of thinkers. Such phenomena abound in the Scriptures, and it is because of the lack of knowledge concerning the laws that govern them that commentators from two opposing camps, ceaselessly spinning around in the same circle of ideas, have not been able to reach a rational solution, some disregarding the objective data of science, others the spiritual principle.

The solution lies in the reciprocal action of spirit and matter. It is true that this solution takes away the supernatural character of most of such phenomena; however, which is better: to accept them as resulting from the laws of nature, or to reject them outright? Rejecting them outright pulls out the very foundation from under the building, whereas accepting them, eliminating only the accessories, leaves the foundation intact. That is why Spiritism is leading so many people to believe in truths that they had previously considered as utopias.

As we have already stated, this work is a supplement to the applications of Spiritism from a special point of view. Its contents have been ready, or at least prepared, for quite some time, but the time to publish them had not yet arrived. First, the ideas that were meant to form its basis had to reach maturity, while, on the other hand, the appropriateness of the circumstances had to be taken into account. Spiritism harbors neither mysteries nor secret theories; everything about it must be clearly stated so that each person may judge it with a full knowledge of the facts. However, each thing must come in its own time in order to arrive securely. A solution given lightly before a complete elucidation of the issue would be a cause of delay rather than advancement. Regarding what is addressed herein, the importance of the subject obligates us to avoid all hastiness.

Before embarking upon the subject matter per se, it seemed to us that we should define the respective role of the Spirits[1] and the individuals involved in the work of the new doctrine. Discarding any idea of mysticism, such preliminary considerations are the subject of the first chapter, entitled: *Character of the Spiritist revelation*. We would ask for serious attention regarding this point because, in a certain way, it is the crux of the issue.

In spite of the part that has fallen to human endeavor in the development of this Doctrine, the initiative belongs to the Spirits; however, it has not been formed by the personal opinion of any one of them in particular. It is not, nor can it be, *other than the result of their collective and concordant teachings*. Because of this unique condition, it may be said to be the *Spirits'* Doctrine; otherwise, it would be only the doctrine of *one spirit in particular,* and thus would have only the worth of a personal opinion.

Universality and concordance in the teachings: such is the essential character of the Doctrine, the very condition of its existence. Consequently, any principle that has not received the consecration of the test of universality cannot be considered an integral part of such Doctrine, but simply an isolated opinion for which Spiritism cannot assume responsibility.

Furthermore, it is this concordant collectivity of the Spirits' opinions, passed through the criterion of logic, that accounts for the power of the Spiritist Doctrine and ensures its continuation. For it to change, it would be necessary for the universality of the Spirits to change their opinions and for them one day to contradict what they have said. Since the source of the Doctrine resides in the Spirits' teachings, in order for it to succumb the Spirits would have to cease to exist. For the same reason, it will continue to prevail over personal theories, which, unlike Spiritism, do not have roots everywhere.

The Spirits' Book has seen its credibility solidified only because it is the expression of a generalized collective thought. In April of 1867 it completed its first decade. During that time the fundamental principles on which its foundations were set were successively completed and developed as a result of the progressive teachings of the Spirits, but none were contradicted by experience; all, without exception, remained standing, more alive than ever, whereas, of all the opposing ideas that some tried to use against it, none prevailed, precisely because on all sides the opposite was taught. This is a characteristic result that we can proclaim without being vain, because we have never attributed such merit to ourselves.

The same scruples having presided over the redaction of our other works, we can truly state that they are *according to Spiritism* because we were certain of their conformity to the overall teachings of the Spirits. The same applies to this work, which we can for similar reasons offer as a supplement to those preceding it, except for a few yet-hypothetical theories, for which we have taken the care to indicate as such, and which must be considered as personal opinions until they are confirmed or disproved so that the responsibility for them should not weigh upon the Doctrine.

Furthermore, assiduous readers of "*La Revue Spirite*"[2] might notice an outline of most of the ideas that are developed in this latest work, as was the case with the preceding ones. For us, the *Revue* is frequently a testing ground meant for probing the opinions of both humans and spirits concerning certain principles before accepting them as constituent parts of the Doctrine.

[1] When we use the term "the Spirits" with the definite article and capital "S", the text is referring to the special group of spirits involved in expounding and helping to codify the Spiritist Doctrine along with the author. – Tr.

[2] La Revue Spirite, a monthly journal founded by Allan Kardec, was published in Paris under his direction from January 1858 through March 31, 1869, the day of his death. Copies of all Revues Spirites from the time of Kardec can be found in their original French at http://pagesperso-orange.fr/charles.kempf/rs140.htm. – Tr.

Part one

Genesis

• Chapter I – Character of the Spiritist revelation
• Chapter II – God
• Chapter III – Good and evil
• Chapter IV – The role of science in Genesis
• Chapter V – Ancient and modern world theories
• Chapter VI – General uranography
• Chapter VII – A geological sketch of the earth
• Chapter VIII – Theories about the earth
• Chapter IX – The transformations of the globe
• Chapter X – The organic Genesis
• Chapter XI – The spiritual Genesis
• Chapter XII – The Mosaic Genesis

CHAPTER I

Character of the Spiritist revelation

1. Can Spiritism be considered a revelation? If so, what is its character? On what is its authenticity founded? To whom and in what way has it been given? Is the Spiritist Doctrine a revelation in the theological sense of the word; that is, is it at all points the product of a secret teaching that has come from On High? Is it absolute or is it susceptible to modification? By bringing completely formulated truth to humans, would not such revelation have the effect of keeping them from making use of their own faculties, since it would spare them the work of investigation? What authority could the teaching of the Spirits have if they are neither infallible nor superior to human beings? What is the usefulness of the morality they proclaim if such morality is none other than that of Christ, a morality that is already known? What are the new truths that the Spirits have brought to us? Do humans have need of a revelation, and can they not find within themselves and within their own conscience everything that is necessary for their self-guidance? Such are the questions on which we must focus our attention.

2. Let us first define the meaning of the word *revelation*. *To reveal*, from the Latin *revelare*, whose root is *velum*, veil, literally means *to go out from under the veil,* and figuratively it means to discover, to make something known that has been secret or unknown heretofore. In its popular and most general definition it means anything unknown that has been brought to light, any new idea that places one on the trail of what one does not know.

From this point of view, all the sciences that enable us to know the mysteries of nature are revelations, and one could say that there is for us an on-going revelation. Astronomy has revealed the sidereal world that was formerly unknown to us; geology, the formation of the earth; chemistry, the law of affinity; physiology, the functions of the organism, etc.; Copernicus, Galileo, Newton, Laplace, and Lavoisier were revelators.

3. The essential characteristic of any revelation must be the truth. To reveal a secret is to make known a fact; if the thing is false, it is not a fact at all, and, consequently, there is no revelation. Every revelation that is belied by the facts is no revelation at all; even though it may be attributed to God, who can neither lie nor be mistaken, it cannot have emanated from God. Hence, it must be considered as a product of human conception.

4. What is the role of a teacher with regards to his or her students, if not that of revelator? The teacher teaches them what they do not know, what they would have neither the time nor the ability to discover by themselves, because knowledge is the collective work of centuries and of a great many individuals, each having contributed his or her share of observations from which those who come afterward may benefit. Teaching is thus, in reality, the revelation of certain scientific, moral, physical or metaphysical truths given by individuals who know about them to others who do not, and who would have continued to be ignorant of them otherwise.

5. However, teachers teach only what they themselves have learned; they are revelators of a second order. Geniuses, on the other hand, teach what they have discovered firsthand: they are original revelators. They contribute the light that is gradually popularized. Where would humankind be without revelation by the geniuses who appear from time to time!

But what are these geniuses? Why are they geniuses? Where do they come from? What becomes of them? Let us note that, for the most part, they bring at birth transcendent faculties and innate knowledge, which a little effort is sufficient to develop. They very much belong to humankind since they are born, live and die like the rest of us. So, from where have they derived such knowledge, which they could not have acquired from their present existence? Might one say, along with the materialists, that chance has given them a greater quantity and better quality of cerebral matter? If that were the case, they would have no more merit than a vegetable that is larger and tastier than another.

Might one say, along with certain spiritualists, that God has blessed them with a soul more highly endowed than that of ordinary individuals? That would be a completely illogical supposition since it would accuse God of being partial. The only rational solution to the problem lies in the preexistence of the soul and the plurality of existences. Geniuses are spirits who have existed longer, and who, consequently, have acquired more and progressed further than those who are less advanced. Upon incarnating, they bring what they know, and since they know much more than others without having to learn it, they are called geniuses. But what they know is none other than the fruit of previous accomplishments and not the result of privilege. Before birth, they were already advanced spirits; they reincarnate either to enable others to benefit from what they know, or to acquire further knowledge for themselves.

Of course, human beings progress by themselves and through the efforts of their intelligence, but left to their own devices such progress is very slow if they are not helped by more-advanced individuals, just as students are helped by their teachers. All cultures have had their geniuses who have come at various times to give them an impulse and draw them out of their inertia.

6. Since we believe in God’s solicitude for God’s creatures, why not believe that capable spirits, through their energy and the superiority of their knowledge, enable humankind to advance, incarnating at God’s will in order to aid progress in a particular area; that they receive a mission much as ambassadors receive one from their sovereign? Such is the role of great geniuses. What do they come to do if not to teach people truths of which they are ignorant – and of which they would perhaps remain ignorant for a long time – in order to give them an impulse by which they may advance more rapidly? These geniuses – appearing down through the centuries like shining stars, leaving behind them a long, luminous trail for humankind – are missionaries, or if you will, messiahs. The new things they teach to

humankind, whether of a physical or of a philosophical order, are *revelations*.

If God calls forth revelators to make known scientific truths, God can, with all the more reason, call them forth to make known moral truths, which are one of the essential elements of progress. Such are the philosophers whose ideas have traversed the centuries.

7. In the special sense of religious faith, revelation applies more particularly to spiritual matters, which humans cannot know by themselves, and which they cannot discover by means of their senses, the understanding of which is given to them by God or God's messengers, whether by direct word or inspiration. In this case, revelation is always given to qualified individuals designated as prophets or *messiahs;* that is, *messengers* or *missionaries* on a *mission* to transmit revelation to humankind. Considered from this point of view, revelation implies complete passivity; it is accepted without question, without examination, without argument.

8. All religions have had their revelators, and although they were far from having known the truth in its entirety, they had their providential reason for being, because they were appropriate for the time and environment in which they lived, and for the particular character of the peoples to whom they spoke, and compared with whom they were relatively more highly evolved. In spite of errors contained in their doctrines, they nevertheless stirred up people's minds, thereby sowing the seeds of progress that would sprout and grow later on, or will blossom someday under the sun of Christianity. It is therefore erroneous to hurl anathemas at them in the name of orthodoxy, for a day will come in which all such beliefs, so diverse in form, but which actually rest upon the same fundamental principle – God and the immortality of the soul – will merge into a great and vast unity once reason will have triumphed over prejudice.

Unfortunately, religions in all ages have been instruments of domination; the role of prophet has stirred up secondary ambitions, and we have seen multitudes of false revelators or messiahs emerge, who, thanks to the prestige of the label, have exploited people's credulity to satisfy their pride, greed or indolence, finding it more convenient to live at the expense of their victims. The Christian religion itself has not been sheltered from such parasites. In this regard, we ask that serious attention be paid to chapter XXI of *The Gospel according to Spiritism*: *"There will be false christs and false prophets."*

9. Are there direct revelations from God to humans? That is a question we would not dare answer either affirmatively or negatively in an absolute manner. There is nothing radically impossible about it, but there is nothing to prove it with certainty. What cannot be doubted, however, is that the spirits closest to God in perfection grasp God's thought and can transmit it. As for incarnate revelators, according to the hierarchical order[1] to which they belong and the degree of their own personal erudition, they can draw their teaching from their own knowledge, or they can receive it from more

highly evolved spirits, and even from messengers straight from God. The latter, speaking in God's name, might at times have been taken for God per se.

These kinds of communications contain nothing strange to whomever is familiar with spirit phenomena and the way in which relations occur between incarnates and discarnates. Teachings may be transmitted in several different ways: through pure and simple inspiration, through the auditory word, or through the seeing of instructor spirits in visions and apparitions, whether in dreams or in the waking state, many examples of which may be seen in the Bible, the Gospels and the sacred books of all cultures. Thus, it is strictly precise to say that most all revelators are inspired hearing or seeing mediums, from which, however, it does not follow that all mediums are revelators, much less direct intermediaries from the Divinity or its messengers.

10. Only pure spirits receive the word of God with the mission of transmitting it, but nowadays we know that all spirits are far from being perfect, and that there are those who present themselves under false appearances; this is what led St. John to state: "Do not believe in every spirit, but first, see if the spirits are from God." (I Jn. 4:4)

Hence, it is just as possible for there to be authentic and true revelations as it is for there to be apocryphal and deceitful ones. *The fundamental character of divine revelation is that of eternal truthfulness. Every revelation tainted with error or subject to change cannot have emanated from God.* Thus it is that the law of the Decalogue displays all the characteristics of its origin, whereas the other Mosaic laws, essentially transitory and frequently contradicting the law of Sinai, are the personal and political work of the Hebrew Lawgiver. As the customs of the people tamed down, these laws fell into disuse by themselves, whereas the Decalogue continued to remain standing as a beacon for humankind. Christ himself made it the foundation of his building, whereas he abolished the other laws. If they had been the work of God, he would not have touched them. Christ and Moses are the two great revelators who changed the face of the world, and therein lies the proof of their divine mission. A purely human work would not have had such power.

11. An important revelation is being fulfilled at the present time: that which shows us the possibility of communicating with the beings of the spirit world. Such knowledge is not new, of course; however, until now it had remained more or less disregarded, that is, without any benefit to humankind. Ignorance of the laws that govern such relations had smothered them under superstition; humans were incapable of deriving any sound conclusion from them. It was reserved for our own era to disentangle them from their nonsensical accessories, to comprehend their scope and to set free the light that must illuminate the course of the future.

12. By enabling us to know the invisible world, which surrounds us and in the midst of which we live without suspecting it, the laws that govern it, its

relations with the visible world, the nature and state of the beings who inhabit it, and, consequently, the destiny of the human being after death, Spiritism is a true revelation in the scientific meaning of the word.

13. By its very nature, Spiritist revelation has a dual character: it derives simultaneously from a divine and a scientific revelation. It derives from the former the fact that its advent was providential and not the result of the initiative and premeditated desire of any one human being in particular; that the fundamental points of the Doctrine come from the teachings given by the Spirits, appointed by God to enlighten humans about matters of which they were ignorant and could not learn by themselves, but which they must now know, now that they are mature enough to understand them. It derives from the latter in that such teachings are not the privilege of any one individual, but were given to the whole world through the same means; that those who transmit them and those who receive them are not *passive* subjects excused from the work of observation and research; that they are not called to renounce their own reason and free will; that scrutinizing them is not prohibited but, on the contrary, recommended; and finally, that the Doctrine *has not been dictated in its entirety nor imposed upon a blind faith*, but rather, that it is deduced through human endeavor, from the observation of the phenomena that the Spirits place right before our eyes, and from the teachings they give, teachings that people can study, comment on and compare, and from which they themselves draw conclusions and applications. In other words, *what characterizes Spiritist revelation is that its source is divine, that its initiative belongs to the Spirits, and that its development is the result of the work of men and women.*

14. As a means of development, Spiritism proceeds exactly in the same way as the positive sciences; i.e., it applies the experimental method. When phenomena of a new order occur that cannot be explained by known laws, Spiritism observes, compares and analyzes them, and tracing the effects back to the causes, it arrives at the law governing them. Afterward, it deduces their consequences and searches for their useful applications. *It establishes no preconceived theory*; thus, it sets forth as a hypothesis neither the existence or intervention of spirits, the perispirit, reincarnation, nor any of the Doctrine’s principles. It concluded that spirits exist when such existence was deduced from the evidence derived from observing the phenomena, and it proceeded likewise regarding the other principles. It was not the phenomena that came as an afterthought to confirm the theory, but the theory that came subsequently to explain and summarize the phenomena. Thus, it is entirely correct to state that Spiritism is a science of observation and not a product of the imagination. The sciences have made no serious progress except when their studies have been based on the experimental method. However, to this day it is believed that this method is applicable only to matter; nonetheless, it is equally applicable to things metaphysical.

15. Let us cite an example. In the world of spirits a very odd occurrence may be observed, which certainly no one would have suspected: there are some spirits who do not believe they are actually dead. Well then! Highly evolved spirits, who know this fact perfectly well, did not come to say beforehand, “There are spirits who believe they are still living the earthly life, who have retained their tastes, habits and instincts”; rather, they caused spirits of this category to manifest themselves so that we could observe them. Consequently, having observed spirits who were uncertain of their state, or who stated that they were still in this world and believed they were attending to their normal occupations, from the example was derived the rule. The great number of such phenomena showed us that this was no exception, but one of the phases of spirit life. It enabled us to study all the varieties and causes of this odd illusion, to realize that this situation is principally characteristic of spirits who are only slightly advanced morally, that it is peculiar to certain kinds of death, and that it is only temporary, although it can last for days, months or years. It was thus that the theory was born from the observation. The same has occurred with all the other principles of the Doctrine.

16. In the same way that science per se has as its object the study of the laws of the material principle, the special object of Spiritism is the knowledge of the laws of the spiritual principle. Now, since the latter is one of the forces of nature, which reacts incessantly and reciprocally upon the material principle, it follows that knowledge of one cannot be complete without knowledge of the other. *Spiritism and science complete each other:* science without Spiritism is completely unable to explain certain phenomena solely by means of the laws of matter; Spiritism without science would lack support and control. The study of the laws of matter had to precede the study of spirituality because it is matter that first strikes the senses. If Spiritism had come before scientific discoveries, it would have been an aborted endeavor, like everything else that arrives before its time.

17. All the sciences are linked together and have succeeded one another in a rational order; they were born one from the other as they found a point of support in previous ideas and knowledge. Astronomy, one of the first sciences to be cultivated, remained in the errors of childhood until the moment when physics arrived on the scene to reveal the law of the forces of natural agents. Chemistry, unable to do anything without physics, had to follow it closely so that afterward the two could proceed in agreement, one supported by the other. Anatomy, physiology, zoology, botany and mineralogy did not become genuine sciences except with the help of the insights brought by physics and chemistry. Geology, born just yesterday, without astronomy, physics, chemistry and all the others, would have lacked its true elements of vitality; hence, it could only have come along later.

18. Modern science demonstrated the truth regarding the four primitive elements of the ancients, and, observation by observation, arrived at the concept of *only one generating element* for all the transformations of

matter; however, matter per se is inert; it has neither life, thought nor feeling; it must be joined with the spiritual principle. Spiritism neither discovered nor invented this principle, but it was the first to demonstrate it through irrefutable proofs; it studied it, analyzed it and rendered its action obvious. To the *material element* it added *the spiritual element. The material element and the spiritual element*: these are the two principles, the two living forces of nature. Through the indissoluble union of these two elements one can easily explain a multitude of phenomena unexplainable till now.[2]

Having the study of one of the two constituent elements of the universe as its object, Spiritism inevitably comes in contact with the majority of the sciences; it could not have appeared except after their development, and through the force of things it was born from the impossibility of everything being explained solely with the aid of the laws of matter.

19. Spiritism has been accused of kinship with magic and sorcery; however, it has been forgotten that astronomy has judicial astrology[3] as its older kin, and which is still not too far removed from our day; that chemistry is the daughter of alchemy, which no sensible person would dare take up nowadays. Based on this, no one would deny that the seed of the truths from which these current sciences arose were to be found in astrology and alchemy. In spite of its ridiculous formulas, alchemy showed us the simple bodies and the law of affinities. Astrology rested on the position and movement of the heavenly bodies it studied. However, due to ignorance of the true laws that govern the mechanism of the universe, such heavenly bodies were, to the common folk, mysterious beings to which superstition loaned a moral influence and a revelatory meaning. When Galileo, Newton and Kepler made those laws known, when the telescope rent the veil and plunged into the depths of space – a gaze that certain individuals found to be indiscrete – the planets appeared to us simply as worlds similar to our own, and the entire scaffolding of the extraordinary collapsed.

The same has occurred with Spiritism regarding magic and sorcery; these also rested on the manifestation of spirits, just as astrology rested on the movement of the heavenly bodies. However, ignorant of the laws that govern the spirit world, they combined with these relations practices and beliefs to which modern Spiritism, the fruit of experimentation and observation, has put an end. Of course, the distance that separates Spiritism from magic and sorcery is much greater than that which exists between astronomy and astrology, and between chemistry and alchemy; to want to confuse them is to demonstrate the fact that one does not know the first thing about them.

20. The sole fact of the possibility of communicating with the beings of the spirit world has incalculable consequences of the highest import; a whole new world has been revealed to us, one that is all the more important because it concerns all humankind, without exception. As it becomes more widespread, this knowledge cannot help but bring a profound change in the

customs, character, habits and beliefs that have such a big influence on societal relations. It is a whole revolution that operates on ideas, a revolution all the greater and more powerful in that it is not limited to one particular culture or caste, but simultaneously reaches the heart all classes, nationalities and religious belief systems.

It is, therefore, with good reason that Spiritism is considered to be the third of the great revelations. Let us see how these revelations differ and by what bond they are linked together.

21. MOSES, as a prophet, revealed to humans the knowledge of one sole God, the sovereign Lord and Creator of all things. Moses promulgated the law of Sinai and laid the foundations of the true faith. As a man, he was the lawgiver of the people through whom this primitive faith, after becoming more refined, would one day spread over the entire earth.

22. CHRIST, taking from the ancient law what was eternal and divine and rejecting that which was only transitory, purely disciplinary and of human conception, added the *revelation of the future life*, about which Moses had not spoken: that of the punishments and rewards that await the individual after death. (See *Revue Spirite*, 1861, pp. 90, 280)

23. The most important part of Christ's revelation – in the sense that it is the primary source, the cornerstone of his entire doctrine – is the entirely new point of view by which he portrays the Divinity. It is no longer the terrible, jealous and vengeful God of Moses; the cruel and merciless God who drenches the earth with human blood, who ordains the massacre and extermination of peoples – including women, children and the elderly – and who chastises those who spare their victims. It is no longer the unjust God who punishes an entire people for the wrongs of their leader, or who takes revenge on the guilty by striking the innocent, or who castigates children for the wrongs of their father; rather, God is one who is kind, supremely just and good, full of tenderness and mercy, who forgives the repentant sinner and *renders to each one according to his or her deeds.* It is no longer the God of a single, privileged people, *the God of armies*, presiding over battles to support his own cause against the gods of other peoples, but the common Father of all humankind, who extends his protection over all his children and calls them to his divine presence. It is no longer the God who rewards and punishes solely through the things of the earth, and whose glory and joy consist in the servitude of rival peoples and in the multiplicity of progeny, but one who says to humankind, "Your true homeland is not in this world; it is in the heavenly kingdom; it is there that the humble of heart will be uplifted and the proud will be abased." It is no longer the God who makes vengeance a virtue and who ordains the retribution of an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, but the God of mercy who says, "Forgive others' offenses if you yourself want to be forgiven; do good in exchange for evil; do not do unto others what you would not want them to do unto you." It is no longer the grudging and meticulous God who imposes, under the severest penalties, the way in which he wants to be worshiped, and who becomes

offended at the non-observance of some formula, but the great God who considers the thought and who is not honored by the form. Finally, it is no longer the God who wants to be feared, but the God who wants to be loved.

24. Since God is the focal point of all religious beliefs, the aim of all forms of worship, then *the character of all religions conforms to their idea of God.* Religions that depict God as vindictive and cruel believe they honor God through acts of cruelty, through burnings at the stake and torture. Those that depict God as partial and jealous are intolerant; they are in varying degrees meticulous as to form, depending on how much they believe God to be tainted by human weaknesses and pettiness.

25. Christ's entire doctrine is based on the character that he attributed to the Divinity. With an impartial, supremely just, good and merciful God, he was able to make love for God and charity toward one's neighbor the express condition of salvation, and state: *Love God above all things and your neighbor as yourselves; such is the whole law and all of the prophets, and there is no other.* Upon this belief alone, he was able to establish the principle of the equality of individuals before God and that of universal fraternity. But was it not possible to love the God of Moses? No, one could only fear him.

This revelation of the true attributes of the Divinity, together with the immortality of the soul and the future life, profoundly changed mutual relations among human beings, imposing new obligations on them and enabling them to view the present life in a different light. For that reason, it had to impact customs and societal relations. Due to its consequences, it is incontestably the crucial point of Christ's revelation, one whose importance has not been sufficiently grasped. Regrettably, it is also the point from which we are the furthest removed and the one that we have ignored the most in the interpretation of his teachings.

26. However, Christ adds, "Many of the things that I am saying to you, you cannot yet understand, and I have many other things to tell you as well, but you would not understand them either; that is why I speak to you in parables; later, however, *I will send you the Consoler, the Spirit of Truth, who will reestablish all things and explain them to you."*
(Jn. chaps. 14, 16; Mt. chap. 17).

If Christ did not say all that he could have said, it was because he believed certain truths should be left veiled until humans were capable of comprehending them. By his own admission, his teaching was thus incomplete, since he announced the coming of the one who would complete it. Hence, he foresaw that we would misinterpret his words and that we would deviate from his teachings; in other words, that we would undo what he had done, since all things would have to be *reestablished*; now, one only *reestablishes* that which has been undone.

27. Why did he call the new Messiah the *Consoler*? This name, significant and unambiguous, is an entire revelation in itself. He foresaw then that humans would have need of consolation, which implies the insufficiency of

the consolation they would find in the beliefs they would formulate. Christ was never clearer or more explicit than in these last words, of which few individuals have been aware, perhaps because bringing them into focus and delving into their prophetic meaning has been avoided.

28. If Christ could not develop his teaching completely, it was because humans lacked the knowledge they could acquire only with time, and without which they could not comprehend it. There are things that would have seemed nonsensical in their state of knowledge back then. To "complete" his teaching must be understood in the sense of *explaining* and *developing*, rather than in the sense of adding new truths, because everything in his teaching existed in seed form; only the key was missing for capturing the meaning of his words.

29. But who would dare allow themselves to interpret the sacred Scriptures? Who has this right? Who possesses the necessary learning, if not theologians?

Who would dare? First of all, science would; science, which does not have to ask for anyone's permission to make known the laws of nature, and which leaps with both feet together over errors and preconceptions. Who has this right? In this century of intellectual emancipation and freedom of conscience, the right of examination belongs to everybody, and the Scriptures are no longer the Holy Ark on which no one would dare to lay a finger without the risk of being struck down. As for the need of special knowledge, without contesting that of theologians, and as enlightened as the medieval theologians may have been – the Church Fathers in particular – they were not sufficiently enlightened not to condemn the movement of the earth and the belief in antipodes[4] as heresy. Even without going so far, have not the theologians of today hurled their anathemas against the periods of the earth's formation?

People could explain the Scriptures only with the aid of what they knew and the erroneous or incomplete notions they held concerning the laws of nature, revealed later on by science. That is why theologians themselves could in all good faith be mistaken about the meaning of certain words and certain incidents in the Gospel. Wanting at all costs to find in the Gospel the confirmation of a preconceived idea, they continued going around in the same circle without abandoning their point of view, so that they always ended up seeing in it only what they wanted to see. As scholarly as those theologians might have been, they could not comprehend causes that depended on laws unknown to them.

However, who will be the judge of the diverse and often contradictory interpretations given outside of theology? The future, logic and common sense. As people become more enlightened to the degree that new facts and laws are revealed, they will be able to separate utopian theories from reality. Thus, science makes certain laws known; Spiritism makes others known; both are indispensable for understanding the sacred texts of all religions, from Confucianism and Buddhism to Christianity. As for theology,

it cannot judiciously allege that there are contradictions in science, when it is not always in agreement with itself.

30. SPIRITISM, taking its point of departure from the very words of Christ – just as Christ drew his from Moses – is a direct consequence of his doctrine.

To the vague idea of the future life, Spiritism adds the revelation of the existence of the invisible world that surrounds us and populates space, and thereby renders belief clear; it gives it body, consistency and reality of thought.

Spiritism has defined the ties that unite the soul and the body, and has lifted the veil that once hid from humans the mysteries of birth and death.

By means of Spiritism, men and women know where they have come from, where they are going, why they are on the earth and why they suffer temporarily; and they see everywhere the justice of God.

They know that the soul progresses unceasingly through a series of successive existences until it reaches the degree of perfection that can bring it close to God.

They know that all souls have the same point of departure and are created equal, with the same aptitude for progressing in virtue of their free will; that all are of the same essence, and that there are no differences among them except the degree of progress they have accomplished; that all have the same destination and will reach the same goal more quickly or less so according to their labor and goodwill.

They know that there are no disinherited individuals, nor are some more favored than others; that God has not created anyone privileged and exempt from the efforts that have been imposed on others for their progress; that there are no beings devoted forever to evil and suffering; that those designated by the name *demons* are spirits who are still little-evolved and imperfect, and who practice evil in the spirit state just as they did in the corporeal state, but who will advance and improve themselves nonetheless; that angels or pure spirits are not beings created apart in creation, but are spirits who reached their goal after having followed the path of progress; that there are, therefore, neither multiple creations nor different categories among intelligent beings, but that the whole of creation has resulted from the great law of unity that governs the universe, and that all beings gravitate toward a common objective, which is perfection, without some being favored at the expense of the others – they are all children of their own deeds.

31. Through the relations that humans can now establish with those who have left the earth, they not only possess material proof of the existence and individuality of the soul, but they understand the solidarity that connects the living and the dead of this world, and of those of this world with those of other worlds. They know about the situation of the dead in the spirit world; they can follow them on their migrations; they can witness their joys and misfortunes; they know why they are happy or unhappy and the fate that

awaits them according to the good or evil they have done. Such relations have initiated humans into the future life, which they can observe in all its stages, in all its peripetias[5]. The future is no longer just a vague hope: it is a positive fact, a mathematical certainty. Thus, death holds nothing to be feared, because it is deliverance, the door to the true life.

32. By studying the situation of spirits, humans know that happiness or unhappiness in the spirit life is inherent to their degree of perfection or imperfection; that each spirit suffers the direct and natural consequences of its wrongs; in other words, that it is punished wherein it has sinned; that such consequences last as long as the causes that produced them; that the guilty would, therefore, suffer forever if they were to persist forever in evil, but that their suffering ceases with repentance and reparation. Thus, since it depends on all to improve themselves, they each can, by virtue of their free will, prolong or shorten their sufferings, just as those who are ill suffer from their excesses as long as they do not put an end to them.

33. If reason rejects as incompatible with the goodness of God the idea of unforgivable, eternal, and absolute punishment – frequently inflicted for a single wrong – and the torments of hell that cannot be lessened even by the most ardent and sincere repentance, the same reason bows down before that distributive and impartial justice that takes everything into account, never closes the door to repentance and unceasingly extends its hand to those who have fallen overboard instead of pushing them into the deep.

34. The plurality of existences, whose principle Christ established in the Gospel, but without defining it more than many others, is one of the most important laws revealed by Spiritism, in the sense that it demonstrates the reality and necessity of progress. Through this law, humans can explain all the apparent anomalies that life presents: differences in social position; premature deaths, which, without reincarnation, would render a shortened life useless to the soul; and the inequality of intellectual and moral aptitudes due to the age of the spirit, who has learned and progressed to a greater or lesser extent, and who, upon being reborn, brings with it what it had acquired in its former lives. (See no. 5).

35. With the doctrine of the creation of each soul at birth, one falls again into the theory of privileged creations; individuals are strangers to one another, nothing connects them, and family ties are purely physical; family members are not linked together by a past in which they did not exist. With the doctrine of nothingness after death, all their relationships cease with life; they have no commonality in the future. However, through reincarnation, they are in solidarity regarding both the past and the future; their relationships continue both in the spirit and corporeal worlds; fraternity is based on the very laws of nature; good has an objective; evil, its inevitable consequences.

36. With reincarnation, race and caste prejudices collapse, since the same spirit can be reborn rich or poor, great lord or proletarian, boss or subordinate, free or slave, male or female. Of all the arguments against the

injustice of servitude and slavery, against the subjugation of women to the law of the mightiest, there are none that logically prevail over the material fact of reincarnation. Therefore, if reincarnation rests upon a law of nature – the principle of universal fraternity – it also rests upon the law of the equality of social rights and, consequently, of liberty.

37. Take away humans' free and independent spirit that survives matter and you will turn them into organized machines, without purpose or responsibilities, without any other restraint than criminal law, and *suitable for being exploited* like intelligent animals. Expecting nothing after death, nothing would stop them from adding to the pleasures of the present; if they suffer, they have no other prospect than despair and nothingness as a refuge. On the other hand, with the certainty of the future, that of meeting once again those whom they have loved, as well as *the fear of seeing once again those whom they have offended*, all their ideas change. If Spiritism had done nothing except free humans from their doubt regarding the future life, it would have done more for their moral advancement than all the disciplinary laws that sometimes restrain them but never change them.

38. Without the preexistence of the soul, the doctrine of original sin – a doctrine that renders all individuals responsible for the sin of only one of them – is not only irreconcilable with the justice of God, but would be senseless and all the more unjustifiable, according to this doctrine, because the soul did not even exist at the time that its responsibility is claimed to have arisen. With preexistence, humans bring *at birth* the seed of their imperfections and the defects they have not yet corrected, and which are expressed through their innate instincts and their propensities toward this or that vice. This is their true original sin, whose consequences they naturally suffer, but with the crucial difference that they undergo punishment for their own wrongs only and not those of someone else. And there is yet another difference – at once consoling, heartening, and supremely equitable: each existence offers them the means to redeem themselves through reparation and to progress further whether by ridding themselves of a few imperfections or by acquiring new knowledge to the point where they are sufficiently purified so as to have no more need of corporeal life, but can live exclusively the spirit life, eternal and blissful.

For the same reason, those who have progressed morally bring innate qualities upon being reborn, just as those who have progressed intellectually bring innate ideas; they identify with the good; they practice it without effort or calculation, and, so to speak, without even thinking about it. Those who are obligated to combat their evil tendencies are still in the struggle: the former have already defeated them; the latter are on the way to defeating them. Thus, there is *original virtue*, just as there is *original knowledge* and *sin*, or better yet, *original vice.*

39. Experimental Spiritism has studied the properties of the spiritual fluids and their actions upon matter. It has demonstrated the existence of the *perispirit*, suspected since antiquity and designated by St. Paul by the name

spiritual body, that is, the fluidic body of the soul after the destruction of the tangible body. We know today that this envelope is inseparable from the soul; that it is one of the constituent elements of the human being; that it is the vehicle for the transmission of thought, and that during corporeal life it serves as the connection between the spirit and matter. The perispirit plays a role so important in the organism and in a number of ailments that it is connected to the physiological as well as the psychological makeup.

40. The study of the properties of the perispirit, the spiritual fluids and the physiological attributes of the soul opens up new horizons to science and provides the key to a number of phenomena incomprehensible until now for lack of knowledge of the law governing them; phenomena denied by materialism for being connected to spiritual matters and qualified by others as either miracles or sorcery, depending on their belief system. Such phenomena are, among others, second sight, at-distance vision, natural and induced somnambulism, the psychic effects of catalepsy and lethargy, prescience, presentiments, apparitions, transfigurations, transmission of thought, fascination, instantaneous healings, obsessions and possessions, etc. By demonstrating that these phenomena rest on laws that are as natural as those of electrical phenomena, and by demonstrating the normal conditions in which they can be reproduced, Spiritism has destroyed the empire of the extraordinary and supernatural, and consequently, the source of most superstitions. If it leads to the belief in the possibility of certain things regarded by some as chimerical, it impedes the belief in many others, which it shows to be impossible and irrational.

41. Far from denying or doing away with the Gospel, Spiritism has come instead to confirm, explain and develop, by means of the new laws of nature that it reveals, everything that Christ said and did; it sheds light on the obscure points of his teachings in such a way that those to whom certain parts of the Gospel had been unintelligible or had seemed *unacceptable* understand them effortlessly and thereby accept them. They comprehend the Gospel's scope better and can separate reality from allegory; Christ seems greater to them: he is no longer simply a philosopher; he is a divine Messiah.

42. Furthermore, if we appraise the moralizing power of Spiritism by the purpose that it assigns to all the actions of life; by the consequences of good and evil that it makes tangible; by the moral strength, courage and consolation it offers in affliction through an unshakable confidence in the future; by the thought of having near to us those whom we have loved, the assurance of seeing them again, and the possibility of conversing with them; and, finally, by the certainty that, of everything that is done, everything that is acquired in intelligence, science and morality – *right up to the last hour of one's life* – nothing is lost and that everything is useful for one's advancement, then one realizes that Spiritism fulfills all the promises of Christ regarding the foretold *Consoler.* Thus, since it is the *Spirit of Truth* who presides over the great movement of regeneration, the promise of its

coming is thus found to have been fulfilled, because, in fact, it is the true *Consoler*.[6]

43. If to these results is added the unheard-of speed of the spread of Spiritism in spite of everything that has been done to bring it down, one cannot deny that its coming was providential, for it is triumphing over all human forces and ill-will. The ease with which it is being accepted without constraint by such a large number, with no other means except the power of the idea, proves that it responds to a need to believe in something after the emptiness dug out by disbelief, and that, consequently, its time has come.

44. The afflicted are great in number; it is not surprising, therefore, that so many individuals welcome a doctrine that consoles instead of doctrines that dishearten, because it is to the disinherited more than to the fortunate of the world that Spiritism is directed. The sick see the coming of the doctor with greater joy than those who are well; in such case, the afflicted are the ill and the Consoler is the doctor.

You, who fight against Spiritism, if you want us to abandon it and follow you, then give us something that is greater and better; that heals with greater assurance the wounds of the soul; that gives more consolation, more satisfaction to the heart, more authentic hopes and greater certainties; that shows a more rational and more alluring picture of the future. Do not think, however, about prevailing over it, you, with your perspective of nothingness, or you who offer a choice between the flames of hell and beatific and useless eternal contemplation.

45. The first revelation was personified in Moses, the second in Christ; the third is not personified in any one individual. The first two were individual; the third is collective – an essential character of great importance. It is collective in the sense that it was not given as a privilege to any one person in particular; consequently, no one can claim to be its exclusive prophet. It has been given simultaneously all over the earth to millions of people of all ages and social standing, from the lowest to the highest on the scale, according to this prediction referred to by the author of The Acts of the Apostles: “In the latter days,” says the Lord, “I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh; your sons and daughters shall prophesy; your young men shall have visions and your old men shall have dreams” (Acts 2:17,18). The third revelation did not arise from any special belief system so that it could serve one day as a rallying point for all.[7]

46. The first two revelations, as the product of a personal teaching, were necessarily localized; that is, they occurred in only one place, from which the idea spread little by little. But they required many centuries to reach the ends of the world, and even then they did not encompass it entirely. The third revelation has this particularity: by not being personified in one individual, it is being produced simultaneously in thousands of different places, all becoming centers or focal points of radiation. As these centers multiply, their rays meet up with one another little by little, like the circles formed by a large number of stones thrown into the water, and in such a

way that in a given amount of time they end up covering the entire surface of the globe.

Such is one of the causes for the rapid spread of the Doctrine. If it had arisen in only one place, if it had been the exclusive work of one person, a sect would have formed around him or her; perhaps half a century might pass before it could reach the borders of the country in which it was born, whereas, after only ten years, Spiritism already has landmarks planted from one pole to the other.

47. This situation, unheard of in the history of doctrines, has provided it with an exceptional force and an irresistible power of action; in fact, even if it were repressed in one place in one country, it would be materially impossible to repress it in all places in all countries. For every one place where it may be prohibited, there will be a thousand others where it will flourish. What is more, even if it might be stifled in an individual person, the same could not be done with spirits, its source. Therefore, since spirits are everywhere and will always exist, if by some impossible chance it could be suppressed all over the globe, it would reappear sometime thereafter because it rests on *a fact, and this fact lies within nature itself* and the laws of nature cannot be suppressed. This is what should dissuade those who dream of the demise of Spiritism. (See *Revue Spirite,* February, 1865, p. 38: *Perpétuité du Spiritism).*

48. Nevertheless, these scattered centers might still remain isolated from one another for a long time, confined as some of them are in far-off countries. Among these there would have to be a uniting link that would put them in communion of thought with their brothers and sisters in the faith in order to inform them about what was happening elsewhere. This uniting link, which Spiritism used to lack, can be found today in the publications which circulate far and wide, and which condense in one single, concise and methodical approach the teachings provided everywhere under multiple forms and in many languages.

49. The first two revelations could only have been the result of a direct teaching; since humans were not yet sufficiently advanced to aid in these revelations' development, they had to be imposed on people's beliefs through the authority of the Master's word.

However, we should make note of the fact that they contained a highly perceptible nuance in connection with the progress of customs and ideas, although they were given to the same people and in the same environment, although after an interval of eighteen centuries. The doctrine of Moses is absolute, despotic; it accepts no argument and is imposed on all the people through force. That of Jesus is essentially *one of counseling*; it is accepted freely and imposes itself only through persuasion; it was controversial even during the time of its founder, who did not hesitate to debate his adversaries.

50. The third revelation, appearing at a time of intellectual emancipation and maturity, wherein the developed mind cannot settle itself into a passive

role, and wherein people accept nothing blindly, but want to see where they are being led and to know the why and how of each thing, had to be at the same time the product of a teaching and the fruit of work, research and free examination. *The Spirits teach only what is needed to place humans on the path of truth, but they abstain from revealing what humans can discover by themselves*, allowing them the right to discuss, verify and submit everything to the crucible of reason, even leaving them many times to acquire experience at their own expense. The Spirits have furnished them with the principle and materials; it is their responsibility to take advantage of them and put them into practice. (See no. 15)

51. Since the elements of the Spiritist revelation have been given simultaneously in a multitude of places to persons of all social conditions and various degrees of education, it is quite obvious that observations could not have been made everywhere with the same outcome, and that the consequences derived from them, the deductions of the laws that govern that order of phenomena, in a word, the conclusion that would establish the ideas, could be derived only from the whole and from a correlation of the facts. Hence, each isolated center, limited to a narrow circle and often observing only a particular order of phenomena, at times contradictory in appearance because they had to do with only one category of spirits, and furthermore, being hindered by local influences and sectarianism, found itself running up against the material impossibility of encompassing the whole, and, for this very reason, powerless to combine the isolated observations into a common principle. With each person judging the facts from the point of view of his or her own knowledge and former beliefs, or from the particular opinion of the spirits who manifested themselves, there would very soon have been as many theories and systems as there were centers, and all would be incomplete for lack of elements for comparison and control. In sum, each person would be paralyzed by his or her own partial revelation, believing that he or she had the whole truth, not knowing that in a hundred other places more and better information had been obtained.

52. Furthermore, it should be noted that no part of the Spiritist teaching has been given in its entirety; it touches upon such a large number of observations and such diverse subjects that require either specialized knowledge or mediumistic abilities that it would have been impossible to bring all the necessary conditions together in one place. Since the teachings had to be collective and not individual, the Spirits divided up the work, disseminating the subjects of study and observation as is done in certain factories where the production of each part of the same object is divided up among different workers.

Thus, the revelation was given partially, in several places and through a multitude of intermediaries, and it is in this manner that it continues to progress at this time, for not everything has yet been revealed. Each center finds in others a supplement for what it has obtained, and it is this

collection, the coordination of all the partial teachings, that comprises the *Spiritist Doctrine*.

It was therefore necessary to group the scattered facts in order to understand their correlation, and to collect the diverse documents and teachings given by the Spirits regarding all points and subjects in order to compare, analyze and study their similarities and differences. Since communications are given by spirits of all the hierarchical orders – some more enlightened than others – it would be necessary to analyze the degree of trust that reason would allow to be given to them; to distinguish the individual and isolated theoretical ideas from those that had the sanction of the overall teaching of the Spirits, and the utopian ideas from the practical ones; to prune those that were obviously refuted by data arising from positive science and sound logic; and to utilize the errors and the information furnished by spirits (even those of the lowest category) for an understanding of the state of the invisible world, thereby forming a homogenous whole. In other words, a center for development was necessary, independent of any preconceived idea, of any sectarian prejudice, and *resolved to accept the truth that had become self-evident, even if it were contrary to personal opinion*. Such a center formed by itself through the force of things and *without premeditated intent*.[8]

53. From this state of affairs a double current of ideas resulted: some moving from the perimeter toward the center, others from the center toward the perimeter. This is how the doctrine progressed rapidly toward unity in spite of the diversity of the sources from which it emanated, and how the divergent theories fell little by little due to their isolation, and due to the ascendancy of the opinion of the majority, in which they did not find a sympathetic echo. A communion of ideas has thus been established among the different centers. Speaking the same spiritual language, they understand one another and sympathize with one another from one end of the world to the other.

Spiritists were much stronger and struggled with more courage; they progressed with a surer step when they found themselves no longer isolated, and when they sensed a point of support, a tie that linked them to the larger family. The phenomena they witnessed no longer seemed peculiar, abnormal or contradictory to them, once they were able to connect them to the general laws of harmony, embracing the edifice in one glance and seeing a great and humanitarian aim in the entire whole.[9]

However, how can one know if a principle is taught universally, or if it is only the result of a personal opinion? Since isolated groups were in no position to know what was being said elsewhere, it was necessary for one center to bring together all the teachings in order to do a kind of scrutiny of views and to take the opinion of the majority to everyone else.[10]

54. There is no science which, in all its parts, has come from the mind of one sole human being. All, without exception, are products of successive observations that find support in previous ones, leaning on one known point

to arrive at an unknown one. That is how the Spirits have proceeded with Spiritism; that is why their teaching has been gradual. They address issues only in proportion and to the extent that the principles upon which such issues must be based have been sufficiently developed, and analysis has matured enough to assimilate them. It is quite significant that every time individual centers have tried to address issues prematurely, they have obtained only contradictory and inconclusive answers. On the other hand, when the favorable moment has arrived, the teaching generalizes and becomes unified in almost all of the centers.

Between the progression of Spiritism and that of the sciences there is a crucial difference, however: the latter reached the point to which they have arrived only after a long stretch of time, whereas only a few years have been sufficient for Spiritism, if not to reach the peak, at least to collect a number of observations large enough to constitute a doctrine. This is due to the incalculable multitude of spirits who, by God's will, have manifested simultaneously, each one bringing the contingent of its own knowledge. The result of this was that, instead of being developed successively over many centuries, all the parts of the doctrine were formed almost simultaneously in a matter of a few years, which was sufficient to group them and form a whole.

God has willed it to be so; first, so that the building could more rapidly be built up to the top; second, so that it could, by means of comparison, have an immediate and permanent control, so to speak, in the universality of the teaching, each part having worth or *authority* only by its connection with the whole, each part harmonized with every other part, each finding its place in the general order, and each arriving at the right time.

By not entrusting to only a single spirit the task of promulgating the doctrine, God has also willed that the least as much as the greatest among spirits, as well as humans, bring their stone to the building in order to establish amongst themselves a bond of cooperative solidarity that was lacking in all the other doctrines arising from one single source.

On the other hand, since each spirit, just like each human being, has only a limited amount of knowledge, individually they were unable to address *ex-professo* the innumerable issues touched upon by Spiritism. This is also why that, in order to fulfill the Creator's designs, the Doctrine could not be the work of only one spirit or of only one medium. It could emerge only from a collection of works, all controlled by one another.[11]

55. One final characteristic of the Spiritist revelation, and which proceeds from the very conditions in which it is produced, is that, being supported by facts, it cannot help but be essentially progressive like all the sciences of observation. By its essence, it is allied with science, which, being the exposition of the laws of nature through a certain order of facts, cannot be contrary to the will of God, the author of such laws. *The discoveries of science glorify God rather than demean God. They destroy only what humans have built upon their erroneous ideas about God.*

Therefore, Spiritism establishes as an absolute principle only what has been demonstrated by the evidence, or what has arisen logically from observation. Touching on all branches of social economics, to which it lends the support of its own discoveries, it will continue to assimilate all other progressive doctrines of whatever order they may be, which have reached the status of *practical truths* and which have exited the domain of utopia; otherwise, it would be committing suicide. Ceasing to be what it truly is, it would belie its origin and its providential purpose. *Pressing forward with progress, Spiritism will never be surpassed, because if new discoveries were to show it to be in error on one point, it would modify itself on that point. If a new truth is revealed, it accepts it.*[12]

56. Of what use is the moral doctrine of the Spirits, since it is none other than that of Christ himself? Do humans even have need of a revelation? Can they not find within themselves everything that is necessary for self-guidance?

From the moral point of view, God has without a doubt provided humans with a guide in their conscience, which says: “Do not do unto others what you would not want them to do unto you.” Natural morality is certainly written in people’s hearts, but does everyone know how to read it? Have they never failed to recognize its wise precepts? What have they done with the morality of Christ? How do those who teach it practice it? Has it not become a dead letter, a pretty theory that is good for others but not for themselves? Would you criticize a father for repeating the same lessons to his children ten times or a hundred times if they did not profit from them? Why would God do any less than such a father? Why would God not from time to time send special messengers to humans, entrusted with reminding them of their duties and leading them back onto the right path when they wander from it, and opening the eyes of intelligence for those who have closed them, just as more advanced cultures send missionaries to those that are less evolved?

The Spirits teach no other morality than that of Christ for the simple reason that there is no other that is better. But what use would their teachings be if they told us only what we already knew? The same might be said of Christ’s morality, which had been taught by Socrates and Plato five-hundred years earlier and in almost identical terms; and of all moralists who have repeated the same thing in all sorts of tones and under all sorts of forms. Very well! *The Spirits have come simply to increase the number of moralists*, but with the difference that, manifesting themselves far and wide, they make themselves heard in the hut as well as in the palace, by the uneducated as well as the educated.

What the teaching of the spirits has added to the morality of Christ is the knowledge of the principles that link the dead and the living, principles that complete the vague notions he gave regarding the soul’s past and future, and which sanction his Doctrine with the laws of nature itself. With the help of the new insights brought by Spiritism and the Spirits, human beings

comprehend the solidarity that connects all beings; charity and fraternity become a social necessity; they do because of conviction what they would otherwise do only because of duty – and they do it better.
When humans practice the morality of Christ, only then will they be able to say that they no longer have need of incarnate or discarnate moralists; then, God will not send them any more.
57. One of the most important questions among those set forth at the beginning of this chapter was this: What is the authority of the Spiritist revelation, since it emanates from beings whose understanding is limited and who are not infallible?
This would be a serious objection if the revelation consisted only of the teaching of the Spirits, if we had received it from them exclusively and had accepted it with closed eyes; the objection becomes pointless, however, from the moment humans add the concourse of their intelligence and reasoning. Moreover, the Spirits limit themselves to placing humans on the path of deductions that they can derive from observing the phenomena. Now, the manifestations and all their innumerable variations are facts. Humans study them and look for the law in them, and they are aided in that endeavor by all categories of spirits, who are *collaborators* rather than *revelators* in the usual meaning of the word. They submit spirits' statements to the test of logic and common sense; in this way, they benefit from the special knowledge that spirits offer according to their position, but without renouncing the use of their own reason.
Since spirits are none other than the souls of human beings, in communicating with them *we do not leave the sphere of humanity* – a crucial fact to be considered. Hence, persons of genius, who have been the beacons of humankind, thus came from the world of spirits just as they reentered it upon leaving the earth behind. Since spirits can communicate with human beings, these same geniuses can provide teachings while in spirit form just as they did while in corporeal form. They can instruct us after their death just as they did while alive; they are invisible instead of visible – that is the entire difference. Their experience and knowledge must be no less, and if their words as humans had authority, such authority should be no less simply because they are now in the world of spirits.
58. However, it is not only high order spirits who manifest, but those of all orders, and such has been necessary in order to initiate us into the true character of the spirit world, showing it to us in all its aspects. In this way, the relations between the visible and invisible worlds are more intimate, and their connection more obvious. We see more clearly where we have come from and where we are going – that is the essential purpose of the communications. All spirits, therefore, regardless of the degree they have reached, can teach us something; but since they are at different degrees of enlightenment, it falls to us to discern what is good or bad in them, and to profit from what their teachings entail. All of them, whoever they may be,

can teach us or reveal things of which we are ignorant, and of which, without them, we would know nothing at all.

59. The great incarnate spirits were unquestionably powerful individuals, but their actions were restricted and necessarily slow to spread. If only one from amongst them – even if it were Moses or Elijah, Socrates or Plato – were to come in these latter times to reveal to humans the state of the spirit world, who could prove the truth of their assertions in this age of skepticism? Would he or she not be regarded as a dreamer or utopist? And even admitting that he or she had the absolute truth, centuries would have to elapse before his or her ideas were accepted by the masses. Wisely, God did not will it to be so; God willed that the teaching be given by *spirits themselves* and not by incarnates in order to convince humans of their existence, and, furthermore, to enable it to take place simultaneously all over the earth, either so that it could spread more rapidly or so that we could find in the correlation of the teachings evidence of the truth, thus giving each person the means of being convinced by him or herself.

60. The Spirits did not come to free human beings from the endeavor of study and research. They did not bring them some kind of ready-made science. Concerning what humans could discover for themselves, the Spirits left them to their own efforts. This is something Spiritists know perfectly well today. For a long time now, experience has demonstrated the error of the opinion that attributes to spirits all knowledge and wisdom, and that it is enough to address the first spirit who comes along in order to know all things. Having departed earthly humanity, spirits are one of its facets nevertheless, and, as on earth, there are those who are more evolved and those who are commonplace. Thus, many of them know less scientifically and philosophically than certain human beings; they tell what they know – no more, no less. As is the case among humans, the more advanced spirits can instruct us on more subjects and can provide us more judicious counsel than those who are less advanced. *Asking for counsel from spirits does not entail addressing supernatural powers, but rather one's equals, the same ones whom we would address if they were alive: family members, friends, or individuals more enlightened than us.* This is what is important to comprehend and it is what is ignored by those who, not having studied Spiritism, have a completely erroneous idea about the nature of the spirit world and the relations with the beyond.

61. So then, what is the usefulness of such manifestations, or if we would prefer, such revelations, if spirits do not know any more than we do, or if they do not tell us everything they do know?

First, as we have already stated, they abstain from giving us what we could acquire through our own efforts; second, there are things they are not allowed to reveal because our degree of advancement cannot bear them. However, that fact aside, the conditions of their new existence expand the circle of their perceptions; they can see what they could not on earth. Freed from the shackles of matter and delivered from the cares of corporeal life,

they judge things from a more elevated point of view, and, therefore, more sanely. Their perception embraces a vaster horizon; they comprehend their errors, rectify their ideas and rid themselves of human prejudices.

It is in that fact that the superiority of spirits over corporeal humanity consists, and, depending on their degree of advancement, the reason why their counsels may be more judicious and disinterested than those of incarnates. Moreover, their environment enables them to initiate us into matters regarding the future life unbeknownst to us, which we cannot ascertain from our current environment. Until now, humans had formulated only theories about their future, which is why their beliefs on this point have been divided into such numerous and divergent theories, from nihilism to the fanciful concepts of heaven and hell. Today, however, it is the eyewitnesses, the very actors in the life beyond the grave, who have come to tell us what it really is – *only they may do so.* Consequently, their manifestations have served to enable us to understand the unseen world which surrounds us, and which we did not even suspect. This understanding alone would be of major importance, in the event we were to believe that spirits were incapable of teaching us anything else.

If you were to go to a country that was new to you, would you disregard the information given to you by the humblest peasants you came across? Would you refuse to ask them about the state of the roads just because they are only peasants? Obviously, you would not expect to obtain from them information of a higher order, but because of where they are they could inform you better on some points than could learned persons who did not know the country at all. You could draw conclusions from this information that they themselves could not, but they would have been a useful instrument for your observations nonetheless, even if only to inform you about the customs of peasants. The same applies concerning our relations with spirits, where even the least of them may teach us something, at least.

62. A crude comparison will render the situation even more understandable:

A ship loaded with emigrants departs for a far-off destination. It carries people from all walks of life, relatives and friends of those who remain behind. It is heard that the ship has wrecked. Not a trace of it remains and no news whatsoever has arrived regarding its fate. It is thought that all the travelers have perished, and all their families mourn for them. Nevertheless, everyone on board the ship – without exception – has reached an abundant and fertile unknown land, where they all live happily under a pleasant sky. However, this fact is unknown. One day, another ship docks at the same land and finds all the castaways safe and sound. The happy news spreads like lightning. Everyone exclaims, “Our friends aren’t lost after all!” And they render thanks to God. They cannot see one another but they can correspond. They exchange testimonies of affection; thus, happiness follows upon sadness.

Such is the image of earthly life and life beyond the grave, before and after the modern revelation. Like the second ship, it has brought us the good news of the survival of those who are our loved ones, and the certainty of meeting them again someday. The doubt about their fate or ours no longer exists. Despair disappears before hope.

However, other results have come to enrich this revelation. Deeming humankind mature enough to grasp the mystery of its destiny and serenely contemplate new wonders, God has allowed the lifting of the veil that had separated the invisible from the visible world. The phenomena involving the manifestations have nothing extra-human about them. *Spirit humanity has come to converse with corporeal humanity and say:*

"We exist, so nothingness does not exist; this is what we are, and this is what you will be; the future is for you as it is for us. You used to walk in darkness; we have come to illumine your path and to clear the way; you used to roam aimlessly; we will show you the goal. Terrestrial life used to be everything to you because you saw nothing beyond it; we have come to tell you, by showing you the spirit life: earthly life is nothing. Your vision used to stop at the grave; we have come to show you the splendorous horizon beyond it. Formerly, you did not know why you suffer on earth; now, in suffering, you see the justice of God. Doing good used to seem to bear no fruit for the future, whereas from now on it will have a purpose and will be a necessity. Fraternity used to be nothing more than a fine theory; now it rests upon a law of nature. Under the dominion of the belief that everything ends with life, the immensity of space is empty; selfishness reigns supreme among you and your word of order is: 'Every man for himself.' With the certainty of the future, infinite space is infinitely populated; there is neither emptiness nor solitude anywhere, and solidarity connects all beings both here and beyond the grave. It is the kingdom of charity with the motto: 'One for all and all for one.' Lastly, at the end of your life you used to say an eternal goodbye to those dear to you; now, however, you will say to them: See you soon!

Such are, in sum, the results of the new revelation. It has come to fill the void left by disbelief, to encourage those stricken by doubt or the perspective of nothingness, and to give all things a reason for being. Therefore, does this result have no importance because the spirits have not come to solve the problems of science, to give knowledge to the ignorant or the means to enrich oneself effortlessly? Nevertheless, the fruit that humans should take from it are not only for the future life. They will enjoy it on the earth through the transformation that these new beliefs must necessarily bring to their character, their likes, their inclinations, and, consequently, their habits and social relationships. Putting an end to the reign of selfishness, pride and disbelief, these beliefs prepare the reign of the good, which is the kingdom of God announced by Christ.[13]

[1] See The Spirits' Book, (International Spiritist Council, 2nd ed. 2008), nos. 96 ff., addressing the subject of the spirit hierarchy. – Tr.

[2] The word element is not used here in the sense of a simple, elemental body, or of primitive molecules, but in the sense of a constituent part of a whole. In this sense, one could say that the spiritual element takes an active part in the economy of the universe, just as one says that the civil element and the military element make up a figure in the total sum of a population; that the religious element has bearing upon education; that in Algeria there is the Arab element and the European element. – Auth.

[3] Judicial astrology is the art of forecasting future events by calculation of the planetary and stellar bodies and their relationship to the Earth. The term "Judicial astrology" was mainly used in the Middle Ages and early Renaissance to distinguish between the type of astrology that was considered to be heretical by the Catholic church, versus the "natural astrology" such as Medical astrology and Meteorological astrology which were seen as acceptable because they were a part of the natural sciences of the time. Today this distinction is largely obsolete. (Wikipedia contributors, "Judicial astrology," Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia, http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Judicial_astrology&oldid=230524294). – Tr.

[4] Antipodes: Places diametrically opposite each other on the globe (Random House, Webster's College Dictionary, 1991). – Tr.

[5] Peripetia: a sudden turn of events or an unexpected reversal. (ibid) – Tr.

[6] Many parents deplore the premature death of their children, for whose education they have made great sacrifices, and they say to themselves that everything has been for naught. However, with Spiritism they no longer regret such sacrifices, and will be ready to make them, even with the certainty of seeing their children die, because they know that if these children cannot use their education in their present life, it will first of all serve for their progress as spirits; that it will be a further acquisition for a new existence, and that when they return to this world, they will possess an intellectual aptitude that will make them more capable of acquiring new knowledge. Such are the children who bring innate ideas with them at birth, who know, so to speak, without having to learn. If these parents do not have the immediate satisfaction of seeing their children benefit from this education, they certainly will have such satisfaction later, either as spirits or as human beings. Perhaps they will once again be the parents of these same children, described as having been fortunately gifted by nature, but who really owe their abilities to a previous education.

The same applies if children become evil as a result of their parents' negligence, as the parents may have to suffer later for the troubles and sorrows that such children will bring upon them in a new existence (See The Gospel according to Spiritism, chap. 5, no. 21, Premature deaths). – Auth.

[7] Our personal role in the grand movement of ideas being prepared by Spiritism, and which have begun to take effect, is that of an attentive observer who studies the phenomena in order to discover their cause and deduce their consequences. We have confronted everything that has been possible for us to gather; we compared and commented on the teachings given by the Spirits at all points of the globe, and afterward we methodically coordinated the whole; in other words, we have studied and have given to the public the fruit of our research without attributing to our work any other worth than that of a philosophical work deduced from observation and experience, without ever posing as the head of a doctrine, nor having wanted to impose our ideas on anyone. In publishing them, we have used a common right, and those who have accepted them have done so freely. If these ideas have found numerous sympathizers it is because they have had the advantage of responding to the yearnings of a large number of individuals, something that does not flatter our vanity, since the origin does not belong to us. Our greatest merit is that of the perseverance and dedication to the cause that we have embraced. In all this, we have done what anyone else could have done as well; that is why we have never had the pretension of believing ourselves to be a prophet or messiah, much less presenting ourselves as such. – Auth.

[8] The Spirits' Book, the first work that enabled Spiritism to enter the philosophical path through the deduction of the moral implications of the phenomena, and which addressed all the parts of the doctrine by touching upon the most important questions that it raised, has been, since its appearance, the rallying point to which the individual works spontaneously converged. It is noteworthy that from the publication of that book dates the era of Spiritist philosophy, a philosophy that until then had remained in the domain of curious experiences. If that book has won the sympathy of the majority, it is because it is the expression of their sentiments and responds to their aspirations; it is also because each one has found therein the confirmation and rational explanation of what he or she had obtained individually. If it were in disagreement with the overall teachings of the Spirits, it would not have had any credibility and would have quickly fallen into oblivion. So, to whom have we converged? Certainly

not to any one human being in particular, who is nothing by him or herself, but a mainspring that dies and disappears, but to the idea, which does not perish because it emanates from a source higher than a human one.
That spontaneous concentration of scattered forces has given way to an immense correspondence, a unique monument in the world, a living picture of the true history of modern Spiritism, where at the same time are reflected the partial works, the multiple sentiments that gave birth to the Doctrine, the moral results, the devotedness and the failures – precious archives for posterity, which will be able to judge individuals and things based on authentic records. In the presence of such irrefutable evidence, what will subsequently become of all the false allegations and defamations out of envy and jealousy? – Auth.
[9] A significant testimony – as noteworthy as it is touching – to this communion of thought that has been established among Spiritists through the conformity of their beliefs are the prayer requests that have come to us from the most distant countries, from Peru to the ends of Asia on the part of people of different religions and nationalities, and whom we have never even seen. Is this not the prelude to the great unification that is being prepared? Is it not proof that Spiritism is extending its vigorous roots far and wide? – Auth.
It is remarkable that, of all the groups that have formed with the premeditated intention of creating a schism by proclaiming divergent principles – just like those, who, due to reasons of self-centeredness or others, do not want to appear subject to the common law, but regard themselves strong enough to proceed alone with enough knowledge to dispense with any guidance – none has arrived at constructing an idea that is preponderant and viable. All have become extinct or vegetated in obscurity. How could it be otherwise, since, in order to distinguish themselves, instead of making an effort to provide a greater amount of satisfaction, they rejected precisely those principles of the Doctrine that were the most powerfully attractive, the most consoling, the most encouraging and the most rational? If they had understood the power of the moral elements that comprised its unity, they would not have been deluded by a chimerical illusion. But taking their little circle to be the whole universe, they did not see in the Doctrine's adherents more than a clique that could easily be overthrown by a rival one. They were strangely mistaken about the essential characteristics of the Doctrine, and that mistake could lead to nothing but disappointment. Instead of destroying its unity, they broke the only connection that could give them power and life. (See: Revue Spirite, Apr. 1866, pp. 106, 111: Le Spiritisme sans les Esprits; le Spiritisme indépendant). – Auth.
[10]1 Such is the object of our publications, which may be regarded as the result of this scrutiny. All the opinions are discussed therein, but the issues are enunciated as principles only after having received the consecration of all the tests, the sole means that could give them the force of law and allow affirmation. That is why we do not lightly advocate any theory beforehand, and it is in that fact that the Doctrine, proceeding from the overall teaching, is not the product of any preconceived theory. It is also what creates its power and ensures its future. – Auth.
[11] See The Gospel according to Spiritism, "Introduction"; Revue Spirite, Apr., 1864, p. 90: "Autorité de la Doctrine Spirite; contrôle universel de l'enseignement des Esprits." – Auth.
[12] Faced with such clear and categorical statements as those contained in this chapter, all allegations leaning toward absolutism and autocracy of principles fall apart, as well as all the erroneous statements that some forewarned or misinformed individuals have lent to the doctrine. Such statements, however, are not new. We have repeated them sufficiently in our writings so as not to leave any doubt in this regard. Furthermore, they point to our true role, the only one to which we aspire: that of a worker. – Auth.
[13]1 The use of the definite article before the word Christ (from the Greek Christos, anointed) employed in an absolute meaning is more correct, since that word is not the name of the Messiah from Nazareth, but rather a quality considered substantively. Thus one will say: Jesus was Christ; he was the Christ proclaimed, the death of the Christ and not of Christ, while we say: the death of Jesus and not of the Jesus. In Jesus Christ, the two words together form one proper name. It is for the same reason that one says: the Buddha. Gautama acquired the dignity of Buddha through his virtues and austerities. One says: the life of the Buddha in the same way that one says: the army of the Pharaoh and not of Pharaoh. Henry IV was king; the title of king; the death of the king and not of king. – Auth.

CHAPTER II

God

The existence of God • The divine nature • Providence • Seeing God

The existence of God

1. Since God is the first cause of all things, the point of departure for everything and the foundation upon which the edifice of creation rests, God is the subject that we must consider before anything else.

2. It is an elementary principle that a cause is judged by its effects, even when the cause is not seen.

If a bird cutting through the air is hit by a fatal bullet, one may deduce the fact that a skillful shooter struck it, even if the shooter cannot be seen. Thus, it is not always necessary to have seen a thing in order to know that it exists. In everything, observing the effects is how one arrives at understanding the causes.

3. Another equally elementary principle that has become an axiom due to its truthfulness is that every intelligent effect must have an intelligent cause.

If one were to ask who the builder of a certain ingenious mechanism was, what would the person think of someone who answered that it had made itself? When a fine work of art or industry is observed, it is stated that it must have been the product of a person of genius, because an advanced intelligence must have presided over its conception. Thus, it is thought that a human being must have made it because it is known that the thing is not above human ability; but it would never occur to anyone to state that it was the product of the mind of a mentally impaired or an illiterate person, much less that it is the work of an animal or a product of chance.

4. Everywhere, the presence of human beings is recognized by their works. The existence of antediluvian humans would not be proven solely by human fossils, but also, and with equal certainty, by the presence, in the ground dating to that age, of objects constructed by humans. A pottery shard, a carved stone, a weapon or a brick would be enough to attest to their presence. By the crudeness or the perfection of a work, one will recognize the degree of intelligence and advancement of those who accomplished it. Thus, if you find yourself in a country inhabited exclusively by primitive peoples and you happen to find a statue that looks as if it had been made by a Pheidias, you would not hesitate to say that, since those primitives are incapable of having made it, it must be the work of an intelligence more fully developed than theirs.

5. Well then! Looking around oneself at the works of nature, observing the foresight, the wisdom and the harmony that preside over all things, one realizes that there is not one of them that does not surpass the highest reach of the human mind. If human beings could not have produced them, it is because they are the product of an intelligence superior to that of humanity, unless it were stated that there are effects without a cause.

6. Some might oppose this with the following argument:
Such works of nature are the product of natural forces that act mechanically as a consequence of the laws of attraction and repulsion; the molecules of inert bodies come together and split apart under the imperative of these laws. Plants sprout, blossom, grow and multiply always in the same manner, each according to its own kind in virtue of those same laws; each individual plant resembles the one from which it came; growth, flowering, fructification and coloration depend on material causes such as heat, electricity, light, humidity, etc. The same applies to animals. The heavenly bodies were formed by molecular attraction and continue to move in their orbits due to the effect of gravity. This mechanical regularity in the use of natural forces does not imply an independent intelligence. Humans move their arm whenever they want to and however they want to, but a person who moved it in the same way from birth to death would be an automaton. Hence, the organic forces of nature are purely automatic.
All of this is true; however, such forces are effects that must have a cause, and no one claims they comprise the Divinity. They are material and mechanical; they are not intelligent in and of themselves, and this is true also; but they are set in motion, distributed and suited to the needs of each thing by an intelligence that is not human. The useful application of these forces is an intelligent effect, which indicates an intelligent cause. A clock moves with automatic regularity and it is this regularity that makes it useful. The force that causes it to move is completely material and not at all intelligent. But what would the clock be if an intelligence had not combined, calculated and distributed that force to make it move with precision? From the fact that such intelligence is not inside the mechanism of the clock, and from the fact that we do not see it, would it be rational to conclude that the intelligence does not exist? It is proven by its effects.
The existence of the clock attests to the existence of a clockmaker; the ingeniousness of the mechanism attests to the clockmaker's intelligence and knowledge. When the clock gives you the information you need at the proper time, would anyone ever think to say: Now that is a very intelligent clock?
The same applies to the mechanism of the universe: God per se does not appear but is affirmed through God's works.
7. The existence of God is, therefore, a fact acquired not only through revelation but also through the material evidence of the facts. Early peoples did not have a revelation; nevertheless, they instinctively believed in the existence of a super-human power. They saw things that were above human abilities and from them concluded that such things must have come from a being superior to humanity. Were they not more logical than those who claim that such things were made by themselves?

The divine nature[1]

8. It is not given to human beings to probe the inner nature of God. *To comprehend God, they still lack the sense that can be acquired only through the complete purification of the spirit.* However, if they cannot grasp the essence of God – God's existence given as a premise – they can, by reasoning, arrive at the knowledge of God's necessary attributes, because, in seeing what God cannot at all cease to be without ceasing to be God, they can arrive at what God must be.

Without knowledge of the attributes of God, it will be impossible to comprehend the work of creation. This is the point of departure for all religious beliefs, and for not having referred to them as the lighthouse that could guide them, most religions have erred in their dogmas. Those that have not attributed omnipotence to God have imagined many gods; those that have not attributed supreme goodness to God make God out to be a jealous, angry, partial and vindictive one.

9. *God is the supreme and sovereign intelligence*. Human intelligence is limited, since humans could neither make, nor could they comprehend everything that exists. God's intelligence, embracing the infinite, must be infinite. If it were supposed that God was limited at any one point, then one could conceive of a still more intelligent being capable of comprehending and doing what the other could not, and so on and so forth ad infinitum.

10. *God is eternal*, meaning that God had no beginning and will have no end. If God had had a beginning, God would have had to have sprung from nothingness. But nothingness being nothing, it cannot produce anything; or God would have been created by another previously existing being, and therefore it is this other being that would be God. If one were to suppose that God had a beginning or will have an end, then one could conceive of an entity having existed before God or capable of existing after God, and so on ad infinitum.

11. *God is immutable*. If God were subject to change, the laws that govern the universe would have no stability.

12. *God is immaterial*, meaning that God's nature differs from everything that we *call matter*. Otherwise, God would not be immutable, because God would be subject to the transformations of matter.

God has no form perceivable to our senses; otherwise, God would be matter. We say: the hand of God, the eye of God, the mouth of God, because humans, knowing only themselves, take themselves as terms of comparison for everything they do not understand. Those images in which God is represented as an old man with a long beard and dressed in a robe are absurd. Their drawback is that they lower the Supreme Being to the meager proportions of humanity; from that starting point to endowing God with all the passions of humanity and to making God out to be angry and jealous, there is only a small step.

13. *God is all powerful*. If God did not possess supreme power, one could conceive of a more powerful being, and so on and so forth until one

encountered the being that no other could surpass in power, and that being would be God.

14. *God is supremely just and good*. The providential wisdom of the divine laws is revealed in the tiniest things as well as in the greatest, and that wisdom allows no doubt about either God's justice or goodness.

The infiniteness of a quality excludes the possibility of the existence of an opposite quality that would lessen or annul it. An *infinitely good* being could not contain the least fragment of malice, nor could an *infinitely evil* being contain the least fragment of goodness, in the same way that an object could not be absolutely black with the slightest nuance of white, nor could an object be absolutely white with the smallest speck of black.

Hence, God could not be good and evil at the same time, because then, not possessing either one or the other of these two qualities to the supreme degree, God would not be God. All things would be subject to capriciousness and nothing would have any stability. Thus, God could be either infinitely good or infinitely evil. Now, since God's works bear witness to God's wisdom, goodness and kindness, one must conclude that, not being able to be both good and evil at the same time without ceasing to be God, God must be infinitely good.

Supreme goodness implies supreme justice, because if God were to act unjustly or with partiality *in just one instance*, or with respect to *just one of God's creatures*, God would not be supremely just, and, consequently, would not be supremely *good*.

15. *God is infinitely perfect*. It is impossible to conceive of a God without infinite perfections, without which God would not be God, because one could always conceive of a being possessing what God lacked. In order for no other being to surpass God, God must be infinite in everything.

God's attributes being infinite, they are not susceptible to increasing or diminishing; otherwise, they would not be infinite and God would not be perfect. If the least fragment of just one of God's attributes were removed, God would no longer be God, since a more perfect being could exist.

16. *God is unique*. God's oneness is the consequence of the absolute infiniteness of God's perfections. Another God could not exist except in the condition of being equally infinite in all respects, because if between them there were the slightest difference, one would be inferior to the other, subordinate to the other's power, and would not be God. If there were absolute equality between both, there would be throughout all eternity one and the same thought, one and the same will and one and the same power. Thus, merged in their identity, they would in reality be only one God. If either one had special attributes, one would do what the other did not, and then there would not be perfect equality between them, since neither one nor the other would possess sovereign authority.

17. It was ignorance of the principle of the infiniteness of God's perfections that gave rise to polytheism, the religion of all primitive peoples. They attributed divinity to every power that seemed above humanity. Later,

reason led them to fuse all those various powers into only one. Then, to the degree that humans understood the essence of the divine attributes, they abolished from their symbols the beliefs that were the denial of one sole God.

18. In sum, God cannot be God except under the condition that God cannot be surpassed in anything by another being, because then the being that surpassed God – in whatever way – even by so much as a hair's breadth, would be the true God. That is why it is necessary that God be infinite in all things.

It is thus in God's existence being proven by the fact of God's works that, through a simple logical deduction, one arrives at determining the attributes that characterize God.

19. *God is therefore the supreme and sovereign intelligence; God is unique, eternal, immutable, immaterial, all powerful, supremely just and good, infinite in all God's perfections – it can be no other way.*

Such is the main point on which the edifice of the universe rests. It is the beacon, whose rays extend throughout the entire universe, and the only one that can guide humans in their search for the truth. Following it, they will never go astray, and if they are often misled, it is for not having stayed the course.

Such is also the infallible criterion for all philosophical and religious doctrines. To evaluate such doctrines, humans have a strictly exact measure in the attributes of God, and one can state with certainty that every theory, every principle, every dogma, every belief and every practice in contradiction to just one of those attributes, or which tends not only to annul them, but simply to weaken them, could not be of the truth.

In philosophy, psychology, ethics and religion there is nothing true except that which does not wander one iota from the essential qualities of the Divinity. The perfect religion will be the one in which not one article of faith contradicts those qualities, and in which all its dogmas can bear the proof of that test without being affected.

Providence

20. Providence is God's care for all creatures. God is everywhere, sees everything and presides over everything, even the very smallest things; this is what providential action consists of.

How is it that God, so great, so powerful and so superior to everything, can get involved in the tiniest details and be concerned with the smallest acts and thoughts of each individual? Such is the question that unbelievers ask themselves, from which they conclude that, even if they were to believe in the existence of God, God's action would extend only to the general laws of the universe, and that the universe has functioned throughout eternity by virtue of those laws, to which all creatures are subject in their sphere of activity, without there being any need for the incessant support of Providence.

21. In their current little-evolved state, humans can comprehend the infinite God only with difficulty. Since they are bound and limited, they imagine God to be bound and limited; they picture God as a circumscribed being and create an image after their own. The pictures we paint of a God with human traits have contributed in no small way to maintaining such error within the minds of the masses, who worship God more in form than in thought. For most, God is a powerful sovereign on an inaccessible *throne*, lost in the immensity of the heavens. And because their faculties and perceptions are limited, they cannot understand that God could intervene or deign to intervene directly in small matters.

22. Given how powerless humans are in comprehending the very essence of the Divinity, they can get only a close idea with the help of comparisons that are necessarily highly imperfect, but which can at least show them what at first glance seems impossible.

Let us imagine a fluid subtle enough to penetrate all objects. Being unintelligent, this fluid acts mechanically by material forces alone. However, if we imagine this fluid to be endowed with intelligence, perception and sensitivity, it no longer acts blindly but with discernment, will and freedom: it sees, understands and feels.

23. The properties of the perispiritual[2] fluid can give us an idea of this. This fluid is not intelligent per se, since it is matter, but it is the spirit's vehicle for thought, sensation and perception.

The perispiritual fluid is not the spirit's thought per se, but it is the agent and the intermediary of that thought. Since the fluid is what transmits the thought, it is sort of *impregnated* with the thought; given the impossibility of isolating it, it seems to us that the two are but one, like sound seems to be one with the air, in such a way that we can materialize it, so to speak. In the same way that we say that the air becomes sonorous, by taking the effect for the cause we could say that the fluid becomes intelligent.

24. Whether or not this happens with God's thought – that is, whether it acts directly or through the intermediary of a fluid – in order to make it easier for us to understand, let us represent it under the concrete form of an intelligent fluid filling the infinite universe and penetrating every part of creation: *the whole of nature is immersed in the divine fluid.* Thus, by virtue of the principle that the parts of a whole are of the same nature and have the same properties as the whole itself, then since each atom of this fluid – if we may so explain it – possesses thought, that is, the essential attributes of the Divinity, and since this fluid is everywhere, then everything is subject to its intelligent action, its foresight, and its solicitude. There is not one being, no matter how miniscule it may be, that is not in some way saturated with this fluid. Hence, we are constantly in the presence of the Divinity. There is not one of our actions that we may hide from its gaze. Our thought is in constant contact with its thought, and it is correct to say that God reads the deepest folds of our mind. *We are in God just as God is in us*, according to what Christ said.

To extend kindness over all creatures, God does not have to look down from the heights of the immensity. To be heard by God, our prayers do not have to cross through space, nor do they have to be spoken with a resounding voice, since, God being constantly at our side, our thoughts resound within God. Our thoughts are like the sound of a bell, which makes all the molecules of the surrounding air vibrate.

25. Far be it from us even to think of materializing the Divinity. The image of an intelligent universal fluid is obviously only a comparison that is more appropriate for providing a more exact idea of God than the images that represent God in human form. It has the objective of making comprehensible God's ability to be everywhere and to be concerned with all things.

26. We have always before us an example that can give us an idea of the way in which God's action can be exerted over the innermost parts of all beings, and, consequently, the way in which the most subtle impressions of our soul reach God. This example was taken from a lesson given by a spirit on the matter:

27. "The human being is a tiny world, where the director is the spirit and the directed principle is the body. In this world, the body represents a creation, of which the spirit represents God (keep in mind that this refers only to a question of similarity and not of identity). The parts of this body, the different organs comprising it – muscles, nerves and joints – are other material individualities, if you will, located at special points of the body. Although the number of these constituent parts, so varied and different in nature, is considerable, no one questions the fact that no movement may be produced or that any one impression may occur at any particular point without the spirit being aware of it. Are there different sensations at many points simultaneously? The spirit senses, discerns and analyzes all of them, and assigns to each one its cause and location, all through the intermediary of the perispiritual fluid.

"An analogous phenomenon occurs between God and the creation. God is everywhere in nature, in the same way that the spirit is everywhere in the body. All the elements of creation are in constant relation with God, in the same way that all the cells of the human body are in immediate contact with the spiritual being. Thus, there is no reason why phenomena of the same order would not be produced in an identical manner in both cases.

"A limb moves: the spirit senses it; a creature thinks: God knows about it. All limbs are in movement; the various organs are in motion; the spirit senses each manifestation, distinguishes it and locates it. The different creations, the different creatures move, think and act in diverse ways, and God knows about everything that happens and assigns to each one what is particular to it.

"One can also deduce the solidarity between matter and intelligence, the solidarity among all the beings of one world and of all worlds, and, finally, of all creations and the Creator." (Quinemant, Parisian Society, 1867).

28. We comprehend the effect, and that is already much; from the effect we work back to the cause and judge its greatness by the greatness of the effect. However, its inner essence escapes us, as does that of the cause of a huge number of phenomena. We are familiar with the effects of electricity, heat, light and gravity and we can calculate them; however, we are ignorant of the inner nature of the principle that produces them. So, is it any more rational to deny the divine principle because we do not understand it?

29. Nothing prevents us from believing that the principle of sovereign intelligence has a center of action, a main focal point that radiates outward continuously, flooding the universe with its emanations in the same way as the sun with its light. But where is this focal point? That is what we cannot say. It is probable that it is not fixed at one point any more than is its action, and that it travels the regions of space unbound. If simple spirits have the gift of ubiquity[3], this faculty must be unlimited in God. Since God fills the universe, one could further believe, as a hypothesis, that this focal point does not have to move about at all, and that it is formed at every point where the sovereign will deems it appropriate for it to occur; thus, one could say that it is everywhere and nowhere in particular.

30. Before these impenetrable questions, our reason must be humbled. God exists: this we cannot doubt. God is infinitely just and good: that is God's essence. God's solicitude extends to everything: this we understand. Thus, God can desire only our good, and that is why we must trust God: this is essential. As for the rest, let us wait until we are worthy of understanding it.

Seeing God

31. Since God is everywhere, why can we not see God? Will we see God when we leave earth behind? Such are the questions that are asked every day.

The first is easy to answer. Our physical organs have limited perceptions that render them incapable of seeing certain things, even material ones. Thus it is that certain fluids completely escape both our sight and our scientific instruments; nevertheless, we do not doubt their existence. We see the effects caused by the plague, but we do not see the agent that carries it; we see bodies being moved under the influence of the force of gravity, but we do not see that force.

32. Things of a spiritual essence cannot be perceived by physical organs. It is through spirit sight only that we can see the spirits and the things of the immaterial world. Thus, only our soul could have the perception of God. Will our soul see God immediately after death? That is what only the communications from beyond the grave can teach us. Through them we know that seeing God is the privilege of the most purified souls, and that, therefore, very few, upon leaving their earthly envelope behind, possess the necessary degree of dematerialization. A crude comparison will make this fact easier to understand.

33. Someone in the depths of a valley is immersed in a thick fog and cannot see the sun. Nevertheless, because of the diffused light, he infers the presence of the sun. If he begins to ascend a mountain, then as he ascends, the fog begins to clear and the light becomes brighter, but he still cannot see the sun. It is only after climbing above the haze and finding himself in perfectly clear air that he sees the sun in all its splendor.

The same applies to the soul. Although invisible and intangible to us, the perispiritual envelope is, for the soul, truly material and still too dense for certain perceptions. This envelope becomes spiritualized to the degree that the soul ascends in morality. The imperfections of the soul are like layers of haze that obscure its sight. Each imperfection that it removes is one less stain, but it is only after it is completely purified that it enjoys the fullness of its faculties.

34. Since God is divine essence par excellence, God can be perceived in all God's glory only by spirits who have reached the highest degree of dematerialization. If imperfect spirits cannot see God, it is not because they are any farther away from God than are the others. Like all the beings of nature, they are immersed in the divine fluid, just as we are immersed in light. The only difference is that their imperfections are "mists" that hide God from their sight. When the fog finally clears, they will see God resplendent; to do so, they will neither have to ascend nor go in search of God in the depths of the infinite. With their spirit sight rid of the moral veils that obscure it, they will see God wherever they may be, even on the earth, because God is everywhere.

35. The spirit purifies itself only over time, and its different incarnations are the alembics at the bottom of which it leaves a few impurities each time. Upon leaving its corporeal envelope, it does not instantly rid itself of its imperfections. It is for this reason that after death it does not see God any better than when it was alive; but to the degree that it purifies itself, it has a more distinct intuition about God. Even if it does not see God, it does comprehend God better – the light is less diffused. Thus, when spirits say that God is prohibiting them from responding to some particular question, it is not that God has appeared to them or has spoken to them in order to condone or prohibit this or that thing – not at all; but they sense God and receive emanations from God's thought, just as what happens with us in relation to the spirits who envelop us in their fluid, although we cannot see them.

36. No human, therefore, can see God with the eyes of the body. If such a favor were granted to a few, it would be only in the state of ecstasy, when the soul is so disengaged from the bonds of matter that seeing God would be possible while incarnated. Such a privilege would be accorded only to select souls who have incarnated on a mission and not for *expiation*. But since the spirits of the highest order shine in dazzling brilliance, it could be that less evolved spirits, incarnate or discarnate, impacted by the splendor

that surrounds them, have believed they have actually seen God. It is similar to a minister sometimes being taken for his or her sovereign.

37. Under what form does God appear to those who have made themselves worthy of such a favor? Is it under some form? Is it a human form or a point of resplendent light? This is what human language is powerless to describe, because there is no point of comparison that could provide us an idea. We are like the blind from birth, to whom one would try in vain to explain the radiance of the sun. Our vocabulary is limited to our needs and the circle of our ideas. The vocabulary of early peoples could not describe the wonders of civilization; that of the most civilized peoples is extremely poor for depicting the splendors of heaven. Our intelligence is too limited for comprehending them and our very weak sight would be dazzled by them.

[1] This section deals with the attributes of God and as in our previous translations as well as throughout this one, we have refrained from employing the masculine pronoun when referring to God (except in certain contexts such as personal spirit communications, scripture and historical quotes). According to The Spirits' Book (2nd ed.), no. 1, "God is the Supreme Intelligence, the First Cause of all things." In this sense, God per se is genderless. The grammatical structure of the present section might seem a bit awkward with the elimination of the masculine pronoun, but it is in keeping with the context. Kardec is addressing the philosophical concept of God, who is infinite in all God's attributes. To refer to God by using a masculine pronoun would thus put a limitation on the infinitude of those attributes. God is beyond gender, and that is the point. – Tr.

[2] From the word Perispirit: "The spirit is surrounded by a substance that might look vaporous to you but which is still quite dense to us [the Spirits]." (The Spirits' Book, no. 93.) – Auth.

(Kardec's comment): "As a fruit seed is surrounded by the perisperm, the spirit per se is surrounded by an envelope, which, by comparison, may be called the perispirit." – Tr.

[3] "A spirit cannot be divided up; however, each is a center radiating in different directions and that is why it appears to be in many places all at the same time. Look at the sun. The sun is only one body, yet it radiates all around and sends its rays to great distances; nevertheless, it does not divide itself up." (The Spirits' Book, no. 92.) – Tr.

CHAPTER III

Good and evil

The origin of good and evil • Instinct and intelligence • The destruction of living beings by one another

The origin of good and evil

1. Since God is the principle of all things and since this principle is all wisdom, all goodness and all justice, then everything that proceeds from God must share God's attributes. Since God is infinitely wise, just and good, God can produce nothing unwise, unjust or evil. Hence, the evil we see cannot have its origin in God.

2. If evil were among the attributes of a special being that we call Ahriman or Satan, then one of two things would apply: either this being would be equal to God, and, consequently, as powerful and eternal as God, or it would be inferior to God.

In the first case, there would be two rival powers struggling unceasingly, each seeking to undo what the other is doing, and mutually opposing each other. This theory is irreconcilable with the unity revealed in the order of the universe.

In the second case, since that being is inferior to God, it would be subordinate to God. Since it had not existed for all eternity – which would make it equal to God – it would have had to have had a beginning. If it was created, it could only have been created by God. Thus, God would have created the Spirit of Evil, which would be the negation of his infinite goodness. (See *Heaven and Hell*, chap. X: "Demons")

3. Nevertheless, evil does exist and does have a cause.

Evils of every kind – whether physical or moral – which afflict humankind, form two categories that must be distinguished: those that humans can avoid and those that are outside their will. Among the latter, one must place natural calamities.

Human beings, whose faculties are limited, can neither grasp nor fathom the objectives of the Creator. They judge things from the point of view of their own personality and the artificial interests and conventions they have created for themselves, and which are not in the order of nature. That is why they often consider as evil and unjust what they would consider just and admirable if they were to see the cause, the purpose and the end result. If they were to seek each thing's reason for being and usefulness, they would realize that everything bears the mark of infinite wisdom, and they would bow before that wisdom, even for the things they do not understand.

4. Humans have received a share of intelligence that can help them avoid, or at least largely mitigate, the effects of all natural calamities. The more they acquire wisdom and advance in civilization, the less such calamities will be disastrous. With a wisely forward-looking social organization, they will at least neutralize their consequences if they cannot be avoided entirely. Thus, regarding those same calamities, which have their usefulness

in the general order of nature and for the future, but which cause damage in the present, God has given humans, through the faculties with which God has endowed their spirit, the means to paralyze their effects.

It is thus that humans make unhealthy areas healthy, neutralize pestilent miasmas, make barren lands fertile and manage to preserve them from floods; that they build more sanitary and sound dwellings which are more solid against the winds that are so necessary for the purification of the atmosphere, and in which they shelter themselves from the elements; and finally, that, little by little, necessity has forced them to create the sciences, which have helped them improve the habitability of the globe and increase the sum of their well-being.

5. Since humans must progress, the ills to which they are exposed are a stimulus for exercising their intelligence and all their physical and mental capabilities, thereby inciting them to search for the means to avoid them. If they had nothing to fear, no need would lead them to seek such means and their minds would become sluggish from inactivity; they would invent nothing nor discover anything. *Pain is the goad that drives humans forward on the path of progress.*

6. However, the most numerous ills are those that humans create for themselves due to their own vices, those that result from their pride, selfishness, ambition and greed, and from their excesses in all things; therein lies the cause behind the wars, calamities, dissentions, injustices, oppression of the weak by the strong – in short, most of the maladies that afflict them.

God has established laws full of wisdom, which have only the good as their purpose. Humans have within themselves everything they need to comply with them. Their pathway is traced out by their conscience and the divine law is engraved on their heart; furthermore, God incessantly reminds them of these laws through messiahs and prophets, through all the incarnate spirits who have received the mission to enlighten, moralize and improve them, and, in these latter times, through the multitude of discarnate spirits who are manifesting themselves everywhere. *If humans were to conform strictly to the divine laws, there is no doubt that they would avoid the most pungent ills, and that they would live happily on the earth.* If they do not, it is by virtue of their own free will, and so they must suffer the consequences (See *The Gospel according to Spiritism*, chap. V, nos. 4, 5, 6 ff.).

7. However, God, full of goodness, has placed the remedy alongside evil, that is to say, evil itself gives rise to the good. A time comes when the excess of moral evil becomes intolerable and makes humans feel the necessity to change course. Taught by experience, they are compelled to seek a remedy in the good, but always as an effect of their free will. When they enter onto a better path, it is due to their will and because they realize the inappropriateness of their earlier ways. Thus, necessity forces them to improve morally in order to be happier, just as this same necessity has

forced them to improve the material conditions of their existence. (See no. 5)

8. *One could say that evil is the absence of the good, the same as cold is the absence of heat. Just as cold is not a special fluid, neither is evil a distinct attribute; one is simply the negation of the other. Thus, where the good does not exist, evil necessarily does. Not practicing evil is already the beginning of the good. God desires only the good; evil proceeds only from humans. If in creation there were a being predisposed to evil, no one could avoid it; but since humans have the cause of evil within THEMSELVES, and at the same time have their free will and the divine laws as a guide, they could avoid evil whenever they wished.*

Let us take a common example for comparison. A landowner knows that at the edge of his property there is a dangerous spot, where those who venture onto it could die or get hurt. What does the landowner do to prevent accidents? He places a sign next to the spot warning of the danger of going further. Such is the law; it is wise and foresightful. If, in spite of this, imprudent persons disregard the warning, go beyond it and something bad happens, who can they blame but themselves?

Thus it is with all evil; humans would avoid it if they would observe the divine laws. For example, God has put a limit on the satisfaction of needs; humans are warned by satiety; if they surpass this limit, they do so intentionally. The maladies, illnesses and death that can ensue are therefore the effect of their own lack of foresight, not God's.

9. If evil is the result of the imperfections of human beings, and human beings were created by God, then one might say that, if God did not create evil, God created the cause of evil, at least; if God had made humans perfect, evil would not exist.

If humans had been created perfect, fate would have led them toward the good. However, by virtue of their free will, fate led them neither toward the good nor toward evil. God willed them to be subject to the law of progress, and for such progress to be the fruit of their own effort in order for them to have the merit for it. In the same way, they bear the responsibility for the evil committed as a result of their free will. The issue therefore lies in knowing the source in human beings for their propensity toward evil.[1]

10. If one were to study all the passions, and even all the vices, one could see that they have their origin in the self-preservation instinct. This instinct can be found in all its might in the animals and in those primitive humans closest to the animal existence, wherein instinct dominates exclusively. Among them there is not yet the moral sense as a counterweight; they have not yet awakened to the intellectual life. Conversely, instinct weakens as intelligence develops, because intelligence dominates matter.

The destiny of human beings lies in the spirit life; but in the first phases of their corporeal existence there are only material needs to satisfy, and toward that end the exercising of the passions is a need for the preservation both of the species and individuals – *materially speaking*. But once they

leave that period, there are other needs: first, semi-moral and semi-material needs; next, exclusively moral. It is then that the spirit dominates matter; if it shakes off its yoke, it advances along the providential path and grows closer to its final destiny. If, to the contrary, it allows itself to be dominated by matter, it holds itself back by identifying with the animal. In such a situation, *what was once something good because it was a need of its condition, becomes evil, not only because it is no longer a need, but because it becomes detrimental to the spiritualization of the being.* That which is considered an attribute in a child becomes a flaw in an adult. So, evil is relative and responsibility for it is proportional to the spirit's degree of advancement.

Therefore, all the passions have their providential usefulness; otherwise, God would have made something useless and noxious. It is their abuse that constitutes evil, and humans abuse things by virtue of their free will. Later, enlightened through their own interests, they freely choose between good and evil.

Instinct and intelligence

11. What is the difference between instinct and intelligence? Where does one end and the other begin? Is instinct a rudimentary intelligence or is it a distinct faculty, an exclusive attribute of matter?

Instinct is the hidden force that drives organic beings to spontaneous and unintentional acts, having their self-preservation in mind. In instinctive acts there is neither reflection, calculation nor premeditation. It is thus that the plant seeks the air, turns toward the light and directs its roots toward the water and the nutritious soil; that the flower alternately opens and closes according to necessity; that vines wrap around their support or grasp it with their tendrils. It is by instinct that animals are warned about what is beneficial or harmful to them; that they seek out, according to the season, propitious climates; that, without having been taught, they construct, with various degrees of artfulness, and according to species, soft bedding and shelters for their offspring, and traps to catch prey with which they are nourished; that they skillfully handle offensive and defensive weapons with which they are provided; that the sexes come together; that the mother gives birth to her offspring and that they seek the maternal breast. Among human beings, instinct dominates exclusively at the beginning of life. It is by instinct that children make their first movements, grip their nourishment, cry to express their needs, imitate the sound of the voice, and try to speak and walk. In adults certain acts are also instinctive: such are the spontaneous movements to avoid a hazard, to pull away from danger, and to maintain one's balance; such are, furthermore, the blink of the eyelids to moderate a bright light, the automatic opening of the mouth to breathe, etc.

12. *Intelligence is revealed through intentional, thought-out, premeditated and calculated acts, according to the turn of the circumstances. It is undeniably an exclusive attribute of the soul.*

Every automatic action is instinctive. The action that displays reflection, complexity and deliberation is intelligent. Intelligence is free; instinct is not.

Instinct is a safe guide that never errs; intelligence, by the simple fact of being free, is at times subject to error.

Even though the instinctive action lacks the character of the intelligent action, it nonetheless reveals *an intelligent cause* that is essentially provident. If one believes that instinct has its source in matter, one must believe that matter is intelligent, even more intelligent and provident than the soul, since instinct does not err, whereas intelligence does.

If instinct is considered to be a rudimentary intelligence, how can it be that, in certain cases, it is superior to rational intelligence? What gives it the ability to do things that intelligence cannot?

If instinct is the attribute of a special spiritual principle, what becomes of this principle? If instinct were to disappear, would this principle be destroyed? If animals are endowed only with instinct, their future is meaningless; their sufferings have no compensation. This would not be in accord with either the justice or the goodness of God. (See chap. II, no.19)

13. According to another theory, Instinct and intelligence would have one and the same principle. Having arrived at a certain degree of development, this principle, which at first would have only the qualities of instinct, would undergo a transformation that would give it free intelligence.

If that were the case, in intelligent individuals who lose their reason and are no longer guided except by instinct, intelligence would return to its primitive state; and when they recovered their reason, their instinct would become intelligence again, and so on at each turn, which is not acceptable.

Moreover, Instinct and intelligence are frequently displayed simultaneously in the same action. In walking, for example, the movement of the legs is instinctive: the person automatically places one foot in front of the other without thinking about it. But when the person wants to accelerate or moderate his or her step, to lift a foot or turn aside to avoid an obstacle, there is calculation and complexity; he or she acts with a deliberate purpose. *The involuntary impulse of the movement is the instinctive action; the calculated directing of the movement is the intelligent action.* The carnivorous animal is driven by instinct to eat flesh, but the precautions it takes and modifies according to the circumstances in order to catch its prey, as well as its foresight of the possibilities, are acts of intelligence.

14. Furthermore, another theory that allies itself perfectly with the idea of the unity of principle results from the essentially provident nature of instinct, and agrees with what Spiritism teaches regarding the relations between the spirit world and the corporeal.

It is now known that some discarnate spirits have a mission to watch over incarnates, for whom they are protectors and guides, that they envelop

them in their fluidic emanations, and that persons often act *unconsciously* under the action of these emanations.
Moreover, it is known that instinct, which itself produces unconscious actions, predominates in children, and, generally, in persons whose intellect is deficient. Thus, according to this theory, instinct would not be an attribute of either the soul or matter. It would not belong to the living person per se, but *would be an effect* of the direct action of the invisible guardians, who would compensate for the imperfection of the intelligence by personally causing the unconscious acts necessary for the person's self-preservation. It would be like the leading strings with which one supports infants who do not yet know how to walk. However, in the same way that we gradually eliminate the use of leading strings as children begin to walk on their own, protector spirits leave their wards to themselves to the extent that they can guide themselves by their own intelligence.
Thus, far from being the product of a rudimentary and incomplete intelligence, instinct would be the result of an outside intelligence *in its fullness*, a protective intelligence making up for insufficiency, whether of a younger intelligence – which it would lead to do unconsciously for its own good what it was incapable of doing for itself – or whether of a mature intelligence, but momentarily hampered in the use of its faculties, as occurs in humans during infancy and in cases of mental impairment.
It is stated proverbially that there is a god for children, fools and drunkards. This saying is truer than one might think. That god is none other than the protector spirit, who watches over the person incapable of being protected by his or her own reason.
15. In this order of ideas one could go farther still. This theory, as rational as it may be, does not resolve all the difficulties of the issue.
If one were to observe the effects of instinct, one would notice, above and foremost, a uniformity of view and a harmony, a surety of outcome that no longer exists when instinct is replaced by free intelligence. Furthermore, we recognize a profound wisdom in the allocation – so perfect and constant – of the instinctive faculties applied to the needs of each species. Such uniformity could not exist without unity of thought, and unity of thought is incompatible with the diversity of individual aptitudes. Only this unity could produce such a perfectly harmonious whole, which has continued since the beginning of time and in all climes with a regularity and a mathematical precision that has never failed. The uniformity that results from the instinctive faculties is a characteristic fact that unavoidably implies *a unity of cause.* If this cause were inherent to each individuality, there would be as many varieties of instincts as there are individuals, from the plant to the human being. A general, uniform and constant effect must have a general, uniform and constant cause; an effect that attests to wisdom and providence must have a wise and provident cause. Therefore, a wise and provident cause, being necessarily intelligent, could not be exclusively material.

Not finding in incarnate or discarnate individuals the necessary qualities for producing such a result, one must look higher, i.e., to the Creator. If one recalls the explanation that was given concerning the manner in which one can recognize providential action (chap. II, no. 24), and if one imagines all beings penetrated by a supremely intelligent divine fluid, one will understand the provident wisdom and the uniformity that preside over all instinctive movements for the wellness of each individual. Such solicitude is more active the less resources individuals have in themselves and in their own intelligence. That is why this solicitude shows itself greater and more absolute among animals and primitive beings than among humans.

According to this theory, instinct is understood to be always a sure guide. The maternal instinct, the noblest of all, which materialism lowers to the level of the attractive forces of matter, is enhanced and ennobled. Due to its consequences, it should not be left to the capricious eventualities of the intelligence and free will. *By means of the mother, God personally watches over all newborn creatures*.

16. This theory in no way destroys the role of protector spirits, whose aid is a fact acquired and proven through experience. However, one should note that the action of these spirits is essentially individual, that such action is modified according to the qualities of the protector and the ward, and that in no way does it have the uniformity and generality of the instinct. God, in divine wisdom, leads the blind personally, while entrusting to free intelligences the care of guiding those who can see, leaving each one the responsibility for his or her acts. The mission of protector spirits is a duty they accept voluntarily, and which is for them a means of advancement, according to the manner in which they perform it.

17. All these ways of looking at instinct are necessarily theoretical and none have a character of authenticity sufficient to be given as a definitive solution. The issue will certainly be resolved someday, when the elements of observation that are now lacking are finally brought together. Until then we must limit ourselves to submitting the diverse opinions to the cauldron of reason and logic, and wait for the light to appear. The solution that will be closest to the truth will necessarily be the one that best corresponds to the attributes of God, i.e., to supreme goodness and justice. (See chap. II, No. 19)

18. With instinct being the guide and the passions the driving forces of souls in the initial period of their development, they are sometimes confused as to their outcome. There are, however, differences between them that are essential to consider.

Instinct is a sure guide, always good. At some point it may become useless, but never harmful. It weakens with the predominance of the intelligence.

At the early stages of the soul, the passions have in common with instinct the fact that beings are impelled by a force that is also unconscious. Passions are born, more particularly, from the needs of the body and have a greater hold on the body than does instinct. What distinguishes them above

all from instinct is that they are individual and contrary to instinct, and that they do not produce general and uniform effects. On the contrary, we see them vary in intensity and nature according to individuals. They are useful as stimulants until the eclosion of the moral sense, which turns a passive being into a rational one. At that moment, they not only become useless but harmful to the advancement of the spirit, in whom they retard dematerialization. They weaken with the development of reason.

19. Persons who act consistently only by instinct might be very good, but would leave their intelligence to remain dormant. They are like children who do not rid themselves of their leading strings and thus do not know how to use their legs. Those who do not control their passions can be highly intelligent, but at the same time very evil. *Instinct disappears by itself; the passions are tamed only through an effort of the will.*

The destruction of living beings by one another

20. The mutual destruction of living beings is one of the laws of nature, which at first glance seems least reconcilable with God's goodness. One may ask why God created a need for them to devour one another in order to nourish themselves at the expense of others.

To those who see only matter, who limit their view to the present life, this indeed seems to be an imperfection in the divine work. This is because people generally judge God's perfection from their own point of view; their own judgment is the measuring stick of God's wisdom, and they think that God would not know how to make something better than they themselves could do. Their short-sightedness does not allow them to judge the whole, and they do not understand that a real good can result from an apparent evil. Only knowledge of the spiritual principle – considered in its true essence – and the great law of unity that comprises the harmony of creation can give humans the key to this mystery and show them providential wisdom and harmony precisely where they see only an anomaly and a contradiction.

21. *True life, for animals as well as for human beings, dwells no more in the corporeal envelope than in a garment. True life lies in the intelligent principle, which preexists and survives the body*. This principle has need of the body to develop itself through labor, which it must perform on brute matter. The body is spent in this labor but the spirit is not; on the contrary, it leaves the body each time stronger, more lucid and more capable. Thus, what does it matter if the spirit changes its envelope more frequently or less so! It is no less a spirit because of it. It is exactly as if a certain man were to change his clothes a hundred times in one year; he would not cease being the same man.

Through the incessant spectacle of destruction, God teaches humans the small case that they should make of their material envelope, and awakens in them the idea of the spirit life, making them desire it as compensation.

Could not God, it will be asked, reach the same result by other means, without obligating living beings to destroy one another? If all is wisdom in God's work, we must assume that such wisdom must not be lacking any more on this point than on others; if we do not understand it, we must attribute it to how little evolved we are. However, we can try to find the reason using this principle as our compass: *God must be infinitely just and wise*: so, we seek God's justice and wisdom in all things and we bow down before what surpasses our understanding.

22. A primary usefulness that arises from such destruction – a purely physical usefulness – is this: organic bodies can sustain themselves only with the help of organic matter; only this matter contains the nutritive elements needed for their transformation. Because bodies, the instruments of the intelligent principle's action, have the need of incessant renewal, Providence makes them serve for their mutual sustenance. This is why beings nourish themselves with one another. Thus, it is the body that nourishes itself from the body, but the spirit is neither destroyed nor altered: it only sloughs off its envelope.[2]

23. Furthermore, there are moral considerations of a higher order.

Struggle is necessary for the evolution of the spirit. It is in this struggle that it exercises its faculties. Those that attack in order to obtain their nutrition, and those that defend themselves in order to preserve their life, compete in astuteness and intelligence, and thereby increase their intellectual powers. One of the two succumbs, but in reality, what has the stronger or more skillful taken from the weaker? Only its garment of flesh, nothing more. The spirit, which is not dead, will take another later.

24. In the less evolved beings of creation, in those in which the moral sense does not exist, or in which intelligence has not yet replaced instinct, struggle will have no other driving power than the satisfaction of a material need; and one of the most imperative needs is that of nutrition. They struggle, therefore, solely to stay alive, i.e., to capture or defend their prey, since they could not be stimulated by a higher motive. It is in this preliminary period that the soul takes its first steps and prepares for life.

In humans there is a period of transition in which they are hardly distinguishable from the brute. In the early stages the animal instinct dominates and struggle still has for its motive the satisfaction of material necessities. Later on, the animal instinct and the moral sentiment counterbalance each other. Humans then struggle no longer to nourish themselves, but to satisfy their ambition, pride and the need to dominate. To do so, they must continue to destroy. However, as the moral sense takes over, sensitivity develops and the need for destruction decreases; it even ends up disappearing and becoming odious. Then, humans become horrified at bloodshed.

Nevertheless, struggle is always necessary for the evolution of the spirit, because even when it has reached the point that seems culminating to us, it is far from being perfect. It is only at the expense of its activity that it

acquires knowledge and experience, and rids itself of the last vestiges of animality. However, from that time onward, struggle, rather than being bloody and brutal, becomes purely mental. Humans struggle against difficulties and no longer against their fellow beings.[3]

[1] The error is in believing that the soul left the Creator's hands already perfect, when God, to the contrary, wanted perfection to be the result of the gradual purification of the spirit and due to its own labor. God wanted the soul, by virtue of its free will, to be able to choose between good and evil, and for it to arrive at its final goals through a disciplined life and by resisting evil. If God had created the soul as divinely perfect, and that upon leaving the divine hands it could already partake of God's eternal beatitude, it would not have been created in God's image, but exactly like God per se. (Bonnamy: La Raison du Spiritisme, chap. VI). – Auth.

[2] See Revue Spirite, Aug. 1864, p. 241, "Extinction des races." – Auth.

[3] 1 Without prejudging the consequences that may be taken from this principle, we only want to demonstrate through this explanation that the destruction of living beings by one another in no way invalidates the divine wisdom, and that everything in nature is linked together. This linkage is unavoidably broken if one ignores the spiritual principle. That is why so many issues are unsolvable if only matter is considered.

Materialist doctrines carry within them the principle of their destruction. They have against them not only their antagonism toward the aspirations of humankind and the moral consequences that render them objectionable as society's agents of dissolution, but also the need we feel to figure out all that is born from progress. Intellectual development leads humans to search for causes. Thus, even with little reflection, it would not take them long to recognize the powerlessness of materialism to explain everything. How could doctrines that satisfy neither heart, reason nor intelligence, leaving the most vital issues unanswered, ever prevail? The progress of ideas will kill materialism, just as it killed fanaticism. – Auth.

CHAPTER IV

The role of science in Genesis

1. The history of the origin of nearly all ancient peoples is mingled with their religion; hence, their first writings were religious in nature, and since all religions are connected with the beginning of things – which also includes humankind – the explanations these religions provide regarding the formation and arrangement of the universe is relative to the state of knowledge at the time as well as the knowledge of their founders. That is why the first sacred writings were simultaneously the first writings on science, just as they were for a long time the sole code of civil law.

2. Because in early times the means of observation were unavoidably highly imperfect, the first theories concerning the system of the world would have to have been tainted with blatant errors. But even if such means had been as complete as they are nowadays, humans would not have known how to utilize them. Moreover, such means could only be the result of the development of intelligence and the consequent understanding of the laws of nature. As humans evolved in their knowledge of those laws, they grasped the mysteries of creation and corrected their former ideas about the origin of things.

3. People were unable to resolve the riddles of creation until the time in which the key was given by science. It was necessary that astronomy open the doors to infinite space to enable them to probe its depths; that, through the power of calculus, they could determine with strict precision the movement, position, volume, nature and role of heavenly bodies; that physics reveal to them the laws of gravity, heat, light and electricity; that chemistry teach them about the transformations of matter, and mineralogy the materials that make up the globe’s crust; that geology teach them to read in the geological strata the globe’s gradual formation. It behooved botany, zoology, paleontology and anthropology to initiate them into the filiation and succession of organically structured beings. With archeology, they could follow the footprints of humankind across the ages. In other words, by complementing one another, all the sciences were to bring their indispensable contingent to the understanding of the history of the world. In their absence, people had only their original theories as their guide.

Likewise, before humans possessed such elements of evaluation, all Genesis commentators, whose reasoning ran up against material impossibilities, spun around in the same circle without being able to depart from it. They were able to do so only when science opened the way by breaking through the old edifice of beliefs; then, the aspect of everything changed. Once the guide wire was found, the problems were quickly ironed out. Instead of an imaginary Genesis, they had a positive and, in some ways, experimental Genesis. The domain of the universe extended into the infinite. We saw that the earth and other heavenly bodies had been formed gradually, according to eternal and immutable laws that attested much better to the grandeur and wisdom of God than did a creation that miraculously popped out of

nothing – like a set change in full view of a theater audience – because the Divinity had suddenly changed its mind after an eternity of inaction.
Since it is impossible to conceive of Genesis without the data supplied by science, one could state in all truth that *science has been called upon to construct the real Genesis according to the laws of nature.*
4. As it now stands in the 19th century, has science resolved all the difficulties of the problem of Genesis?
Certainly not, but it is incontestable that it has irretrievably destroyed all the crucial errors and has laid down the most important fundamentals based upon irrefutable data. Properly speaking, the points still uncertain are only a matter of detail, whose solution, whatever it may be in the future, cannot harm the whole. Furthermore, notwithstanding all the resources at its disposal, it has, until now, lacked an important element, without which the work could never be complete.
5. Of all the ancient geneses, the one that comes closest to modern scientific data – notwithstanding the errors it contains that are today demonstrated by the evidence – is incontestably that of Moses. A few of its errors are more apparent than real; they arise either from a false interpretation of certain words, whose original meanings have been lost in passing from one language to another through translation, or whose acceptation has changed with peoples' customs, or from the allegorical form peculiar to the Oriental style, taking it literally instead of searching for its spiritual meaning.
6. The Bible obviously contains things that reason, developed by science, could not accept today, and others that seem strange and objectionable because they are connected with customs that are no longer ours. But alongside this, one would be biased not to recognize that it contains great and beautiful things. Allegory takes up considerable space in it, and behind this veil it hides sublime truths that will come to light if we look for the essence of the thought, because then the absurd disappears.
Why was this veil not lifted earlier? On one hand, because of the lack of understanding that only science and a healthy philosophy could furnish, and, on the other, because of the principle of the absolute immutability of faith, the consequence of an overly blind respect for literalness before which reason should bow down, and consequently, the fear of compromising the scaffolding of beliefs framed on literal meaning. Because these beliefs were rooted in a primitive starting point, it was feared that if the first link of the chain were broken, the entire weave of the network would end up coming undone. Thus, eyes remained shut. However, shutting one's eyes to danger does not avert it. When a building leans, is it not more prudent to immediately replace the faulty stones with good ones rather than, out of respect for the building's age, wait for the problem to become unfixable, thereby making it necessary to rebuild it from top to bottom?
7. In taking its investigations to the ends of the earth and into the depths of the heavens, science has undisputedly demonstrated the errors in the

Mosaic Genesis when taken literally, and the material impossibility for things to have happened in the exact way they are textually recorded. In doing so, science struck a deep blow to popular beliefs. The orthodox faith thus became unsettled because it believed that its foundation stone had been pulled out from under it. But which would be right: science, moving ahead prudently and progressively over the solid ground of calculation and observation without affirming anything before having the proof well in hand, or a narrative written at a time when the means of observation were completely lacking? After all, who must prevail: someone who says that two plus two equals five and refuses to test it, or someone who says that two plus two equals four and proves it?

8. But then, one might ask, if the Bible is a divine revelation, has God made a mistake? If it is not a divine revelation, it no longer has authority and Christianity collapses for lack of a foundation.

One of two things applies: either science is wrong or it is right. If it is right, then a contrary opinion cannot be true. There is no revelation that can prevail over the authority of the facts.

Incontestably, God, who is all truth, cannot induce humans to error, either knowingly or unknowingly; otherwise, God would not be God. Thus, if the facts contradict the words that are attributed to God, then we must logically conclude that either God did not speak them or such words have been misunderstood. If religion has suffered from its contradictions in some parts, the error is not because of science, which cannot make a fact out of something that is not, but because of humans for having prematurely established absolute dogmas, of which they have made a matter of life or death concerning theories susceptible of being disproved by experience.

There are things that we must resign ourselves to sacrificing – like it or not – when we cannot do otherwise. As the world moves ahead, with the will of a few unable to stop it, it is wisest to go along with it and adapt oneself to the new state of affairs, rather than to cling to the past as it collapses and risk collapsing along with it.

9. Out of respect for the texts regarded as sacred, should we impose silence on science? That would have been something as impossible as keeping the earth from turning. Religions – whichever ones they may be – have never gained anything by upholding patent errors. Science’s mission is to discover the laws of nature, and since those laws are works of God, they cannot be contrary to religions founded on truth. To anathematize progress for being detrimental to religion is to anathematize the very work of God. Furthermore, it would be not worthwhile because all the anathemas in the world will not prevent science from moving forward and the truth from coming to light. *If religion refuses to move forward with science, then science will advance by itself.*

10. Only stagnant religions need fear the discoveries of science. Such discoveries are not threatening except to those who allow themselves to be outdistanced by progressive ideas, remaining immobilized in the absolutism

of their beliefs. Generally, they have such a miniscule idea of the Divinity that they cannot understand that assimilating the laws of nature revealed by science means glorifying God for God's works. In their blindness, they prefer to pay homage to the Spirit of Evil. *Any religion that would not be in contradiction with the laws of nature at any point would have nothing to fear of progress and would be invulnerable*.

11. Genesis entails two parts: the history of the formation of the physical world and that of humankind considered from its two-fold principle: corporeal and spiritual. Science is limited to studying the laws that govern matter; regarding human beings, it studies only the corporeal envelope. From this aspect, it has grasped with incontestable precision the principal parts of the mechanism of the universe and the human organism. Thus, concerning that crucial point, it can therefore complete the Genesis of Moses and rectify its faulty parts.

But the history of the human being from the spiritual point of view is linked to a special order of ideas that is not within the domain of science per se, and therefore science has not made it an object of its investigations. Philosophy, which more particularly has this genre of study among its attributions, has formulated only contradictory theories concerning the point at issue, from pure spirituality all the way to the denial of the spiritual principle altogether – and God even – with no other bases than the personal ideas of their authors. Thus, philosophy has left the issue undecided for lack of sufficient verification.

12. This issue, however, is of utmost importance for human beings, because it addresses the problem of their past and future. The problem of the physical world affects them only indirectly. What is important for them more than anything else is to know where they have come from and where they are going; whether they have already lived and if they will continue to do so, and what fate is reserved for them.

Concerning all such matters, science is mute. Philosophy provides only opinions that diametrically oppose one another, but at least it allows for discussion, which leads many individuals to rally to its side rather than that of religion, which it does not discuss.

13. All religions are in agreement as to the principle of the existence of the soul, without, however, demonstrating it. Even so, they are not in agreement as to the soul's origin, nor its past or its future, especially – and this is essential – as to the conditions upon which its future fate depends. Most of them impose on the beliefs of their followers a picture of the soul's future that could only be accepted on blind faith because it cannot hold up under serious examination. Because the destiny they accord to the soul is linked in their dogmas to the ideas once held about the material world and the mechanism of the universe in ancient times, such destiny is irreconcilable with the state of current knowledge. Thus, since they can only lose out to examination and discussion, religions have found it simpler to proscribe both.

14. From the disagreements concerning the future of the human being, both doubt and disbelief have arisen. However, disbelief has left a painful emptiness. Humans regard with anxiety the unknown, which, sooner or later, they will unavoidably have to enter. The idea of nothingness chills them. Their conscience tells them there is something beyond the present, but what? Their developed reason no longer allows them to accept the stories that comforted them in childhood, taking allegory for reality. What is the meaning of such allegory? Science has pulled back a corner of the veil, but it has not revealed what is most important for them to know. They question in vain, but no one answers in a peremptory or appropriate manner to calm their apprehensions. Everywhere, they encounter affirmation clashing with negation, without proofs that are more positive on one side or the other. Hence the uncertainty, and *uncertainty about matters of the future life makes people throw themselves frantically into the things of the material life.*

Such is the unavoidable effect of times of transition: the edifice of the past collapses but that of the future has not yet been built. Humans are like adolescents who no longer hold to the naive beliefs of their early years, but who do not yet have the knowledge of adulthood. They have only vague yearnings that they do not know how to define.

15. If the question of the spiritual individual remained a theory until now, it was because humans lacked the means of direct observation needed to observe the state of the material world, and the field remained open to the conceptions of the human mind. As long as humans did not know about the laws that govern matter and could not apply the experimental method, they erred from theory to theory regarding the mechanics of the universe and the formation of the earth. This occurred both in the mental order and the physical order. In order to set their ideas, they lacked the essential element: knowledge of the laws of the spiritual principle. This knowledge was reserved for our time, just as the laws of matter were the work of the past two centuries.

16. Until now, the study of the spiritual principle in metaphysics was purely speculative and theoretical; in Spiritism, it is completely experimental. With the help of the faculty of mediumship, more developed in our day and, above all, generalized and more thoroughly studied, humans are in possession of a new instrument of observation. Mediumship has been for the spirit world what the telescope has been for the heavenly world and the microscope for the infinitely small world. Mediumship has enabled humans to explore and study with their own eyes, so to speak, the spirit world’s relations with the corporeal world; to isolate, in the living human, the intelligent being from the physical being, and to see them acting separately. Once relations with the inhabitants of this spirit world were established, it was finally possible to follow the soul in its evolutionary ascent, its migrations and its transformations. One could finally study the spiritual

element. That is what previous commentators on Genesis lacked in order to understand it and rectify the errors.

17. The spirit and material worlds are in constant contact and are thus in solidarity with each other; both have their share of the action in Genesis. Without knowledge of the laws that govern the former, it would be as impossible to construct a complete Genesis as it is for a sculptor to give life to a statue. Only now, while neither material science nor spiritual science have spoken their final word, do humans possess the two elements suitable for shedding light on this huge problem. It was necessary to have these two keys to arrive at a solution – even an approximate one.

CHAPTER V

Ancient and modern world theories

1. The first idea that humans formed about the earth, the movement of the heavenly bodies and the constitution of the universe had to have been based at the beginning solely on the attestation of the senses. Not knowing about the most elementary laws of physics and the forces of nature, and having nothing except sight as a means of observation, they could judge only by appearances.

Seeing the sun appear in the morning at one end of the horizon and then disappear in the evening at the opposite end, they naturally concluded that the sun revolved around the earth, which remained stationary. If, at the time, someone had told them that the opposite occurred, they would have responded that such could not be; they would have stated, “We see the sun changing places but we do not feel the earth moving.”

2. The short distance of excursions, which rarely went beyond the limits of the tribe or the valley, could not corroborate the fact that the earth was round. Besides, how could it be imagined that the earth was a ball? After all, people would not have been able to stand up except on the top, and assuming the earth to be inhabited over its entire surface, how could people be living in the opposite hemisphere with their head down and their feet up? The matter would have seemed even less possible with the earth’s rotational movement. Even nowadays, when the law of gravity is known, there are relatively knowledgeable people who do not understand this phenomenon; one should not marvel that early humans did not even suspect it.

Hence, to them the earth was a flat, circular surface like a millstone, extending to be lost from view in the horizontal direction. Thus the expression still used: “To go to the ends of the earth.” Its edges, depth, interior and lower surface were unknown.[1]

3. The sky, appearing in concave form, was, according to common belief, in fact a canopy, whose lower edges rested on the earth and marked out its boundaries; it was a vast dome filling with sky. Without any notion of the infinite or space – incapable of even conceiving of it – people imagined that this canopy was made of solid matter; hence the name *firmament*, which has survived the belief and which means *firm, resistant* (from the Latin *firmamentum*, derived from *firmus* and from the Greek *herma, hermatos*, firm, support, prop, point of support).

4. The stars, whose nature they could not suspect, were simply luminous points of various sizes, attached to the canopy like suspended lamps and scattered over a single surface; consequently, all were the same distance from the earth, in the same way that they are represented inside certain domes painted blue to imitate the blue of the sky.

While today’s ideas are completely different, the use of ancient expressions has been preserved. It is still stated, for instance: the starry canopy; under the dome of heaven.

5. The formation of clouds due to the evaporation of earth's waters was equally unknown at the time. It would not have crossed anyone's mind that the rain that fell from the sky had its origin on the earth, from which no one could see it rise. Thus, the belief in the existence of *waters above* and *waters below*, of heavenly springs and terrestrial springs, and of reservoirs located in the high regions: an assumption that agreed perfectly with the idea of a solid canopy capable of holding them. The waters above escaped through cracks in the canopy to fall as rain, and depending on the length of these cracks, the rain was either light or torrential and diluvial.

6. Complete ignorance regarding the whole of the universe and the laws of nature that govern it, the composition and destination of the heavenly bodies, which, after all, appear so small in comparison to the earth, necessarily led to the view that the earth was the principal thing, the sole goal of creation, and that the heavenly bodies were merely accessories created exclusively for its inhabitants. This preconception has been perpetuated even nowadays despite the discoveries of science that have changed humankind's aspect of the world. How many people still believe that the stars are ornaments in the sky meant solely for the enjoyment of earth's inhabitants!

7. It did not take long to perceive the apparent movement of the stars, which moved en mass from east to west, rising in the evening and setting in the morning, and preserving their respective positions. For a long time this observation had no other consequence except confirming the idea of a solid canopy carrying the stars along in its rotational movement.

Such early, simplistic ideas were, for long centuries of time, the foundation of religious beliefs and served as the basis for all ancient cosmogonies.

8. Later, by the direction of the movement of the stars and their periodic return in the same order, it was perceived that the celestial canopy could not be simply a semi-sphere anchored over the earth, but an entire hollow sphere, in whose center was the earth, always flat – or more or less convex – and inhabited only on its upper surface. This was progress, at least.

But upon what was the earth anchored? It would be pointless to report all the foolish notions conceived by the imagination, such as that of the Indians, who said that it was supported by four white elephants resting on the wings of a huge vulture. The most sensible confessed that they had no idea.

9. However, one opinion widespread among the pagan theogonies[2] located the habitation of the condemned in the *lower places,* that is, in the depths of the earth, about which not much was known, and which was called *inferno [hell]*, which means the *inferior places*, and the habitation of the blessed in the *upper places* beyond the region of the stars. The word *inferno* has remained to our time, although it has lost its etymological significance because geology has dislodged the place of eternal sorrows from the innards of the earth and because astronomy has demonstrated that there is no upper or lower in infinite space.

10. Under the clear sky of Chaldea, India and Egypt, the birthplaces of the most ancient civilizations, the movement of the heavenly bodies could be observed with as much precision as the lack of special instruments allowed. It was first noted that certain stars moved independently from the others, which no longer allowed the supposition that they were attached to the canopy. They were called *wandering stars* or *planets* to distinguish them from the fixed stars. Their movements and periodic returns were calculated. In the diurnal movement of the starry sphere, the immobility of the North Star was observed, around which the others moved every twenty-four hours and in parallel oblique circles, some larger, others smaller, according to their distance from the central star. This was the first step toward the realization that the earth's axis was tilted. Longer voyages enabled observing the difference in the aspect of the sky according to latitude and season. The height of the North Star above the horizon varied with the latitude and showed the way to the roundness of the earth. Thus, little by little, a more precise idea of the world was arrived at.

Around 600 B.C. *Thales* of Miletus (Asia Minor) discovers the sphericity of the earth, the tilt of the axis and the cause of eclipses.

A century later, *Pythagoras* of Samos discovers the diurnal movement of the earth on its axis and its annual movement around the sun, and he links the planets and comets to the solar system.

Hipparchus of Alexandria (Egypt), 160 years B.C., invents the astrolabe, calculates and predicts eclipses, observes sunspots and determines the tropical year and the duration of the moon's revolutions.

As valuable as these discoveries were for the progress of science, they took nearly 2,000 years to become popularized. Since new ideas had no means for their publication except rare manuscripts, they remained the patrimony of a few philosophers, who taught them to their privileged disciples. The masses, whom no one bothered to enlighten, did not benefit from them at all and continued to hold to their old beliefs.

11. Around 140 A.D., *Ptolemy*, one of the most illustrious men of the Alexandrian School, combined his own ideas with common beliefs and with a few of the more recent astronomical discoveries and composed a theory that one might call "mixed," which bore his name, and was the only one adopted in the civilized world for close to fifteen centuries.

According to the Ptolemaic theory, the earth is a sphere in the center of the universe; it is composed of four elements: earth, water, air and fire. This was the first region and was called *elementary*. The second, called *ethereal*, encompassed eleven heavens or concentric spheres spinning around the earth, as follows: the heavens of the moon, of Mercury, Venus, the sun, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, the fixed stars, the first crystalline transparent solid sphere, the second crystalline sphere, and finally, the first mobile sphere, which gave movement to all the lower heavens and caused them to make one revolution every twenty-four hours. Beyond the eleven heavens was Empyrean, the habitation of the blessed, derived from the Greek *pyr* or *pur*,

meaning fire, because it was believed that this region blazed with light like fire.
The belief in many superimposed heavens prevailed for a long time, but it varied regarding the number. The seventh heaven was usually considered the highest; hence the expression: To be taken up to the seventh heaven. St. Paul said that he had been taken up to the third heaven.
Independent of the common movement, the heavenly bodies had, according to Ptolemy, their own movements that were more considerable or less so, depending on their distance from the center. The fixed stars made one revolution every 25,816 years. This calculation implies knowledge of the precession of the equinoxes, which actually takes 25,868 years.
12. At the beginning of the 16th century, *Copernicus*, a famous astronomer, born in Thorn (Prussia) in 1472 and died in 1543, takes up Pythagoras' ideas. He publishes a theory which, confirmed every day by new observations, was favorably received and did not take long to debunk that of Ptolemy. According to this theory, the sun is in the center and the planets trace out circular orbits around it; the moon is a satellite of the earth.
A century later, in 1609, Galileo, born in Florence, invents the telescope. In 1610 he discovers the four moons of Jupiter and calculates their revolutions. He realizes that the planets do not have their own light like the stars but that they are illuminated by the sun and are spheres like the earth. He observes their phases and determines the duration of their rotation on their axes; thus, with physical proof he gives a definitive sanction to the theory of Copernicus.
From there the foundation of the superimposed heavens collapsed. The planets were recognized as being worlds similar to the earth and, like it, undoubtedly inhabited; the stars are innumerable suns, probable centers of as many other planetary systems; and the sun itself was recognized as being a star, the center of a vortex of planets subject to it.
The stars are no longer confined within a zone of the celestial sphere but are irregularly scattered throughout limitless space; those that seem to touch each other are actually at incommensurable distances from one another; the smallest in appearance are the most distant from us; the larger ones, those that are the closest, are still hundreds of thousands of leagues away.
The groups to which were given the name *constellations* are only apparent groupings caused by distance; their shapes are the effects of perspective, like the shapes forming for someone standing at a fixed point, observing lights spread out over a vast plain or the trees of a forest. In reality, however, such groupings do not exist. If one could be transported to a region of one of these constellations, to the degree that one got closer, its form would disappear and new groups would take shape.
Since these groups exist only in appearance, the significance that a superstitious common belief attributes to them is illusory and its influence could exist only in the imagination.

To distinguish the constellations from one another, they were given names such as *Leo, Taurus, Gemini, Virgo, the Scales, Capricorn, Cancer, Orion, Hercules, Ursa Major or David's Chariot, Ursa Minor, the Lyre, etc.*, and were represented as shapes that those names – mostly from fantasy – brought to mind, but which in most cases have no relation to the apparent shape of the group of stars. Thus, it is pointless to seek such shapes in the sky.

The belief in the influence of the constellations, especially those that comprise the twelve signs of the Zodiac, comes from the idea connected to the names they bear. If the one called *Leo* had been called *ass* or *sheep*, one would certainly have attributed to it a completely different influence.

13. Beginning with Copernicus and Galileo, the ancient cosmogonies were destroyed forever. Astronomy could only evolve, not regress. History tells of the struggles that those men of genius had to endure against prejudices and, above all, against the spirit of sectarianism, which was interested in maintaining the errors upon which belief had been founded and which had been thought to be firmly set on an unshakable base. It took only the invention of one optical instrument to demolish a foundation of many thousands of years. However, nothing could prevail against a truth recognized as such. Thanks to the printing press, the public was initiated into these new ideas; no longer lulled to sleep with illusions, it joined the fray. It was no longer a few individuals that had to be combated, but general opinion, which took up the defense of the truth.

How grand the universe is in comparison with the miniscule proportions that our ancestors assigned to it! How sublime the work of God is when we see it accomplished according to the eternal laws of nature! But also, how much time, how much effort of genius, how much dedication was necessary to open people's eyes and finally remove the blindfold of ignorance!

14. From there, the way was opened onto which illustrious and numerous scholars were to enter in order to complete the work that had been sketched out. In Germany, Kepler discovers the famous laws that bear his name, through which it is recognized that the planets do not trace out circular orbits but elliptical ones, of which the sun occupies one of the focal points. In England, Newton discovers the law of universal gravity. Laplace, in France, creates celestial mechanics. Finally, astronomy is no longer a system founded on conjecture or probability, but a science established on the strictest bases of calculus and geometry. Thereby, one of the fundamental stones of Genesis is laid around 3,300 years after Moses.

[1] "Hindu mythology taught that, in the evening, the day star extinguished its light and crossed the sky during the night with a dark face. Greek mythology represented the sun as Apollo's chariot pulled by four horses. Anaximander of Miletus believed, in accord with Plutarch, that the sun was a chariot filled with a very bright fire that escaped through a circular opening. Epicurus, according to some, would have expressed the opinion that the sun lit up in the morning and faded in the evening in the waters of the ocean; others think that he believed that it was a pumice stone heated to an incandescent state. Anaxagoras considered it to be a heated iron the size of the Peloponnesus. A singular remark! The ancients were so invincibly led to consider the apparent size of the sun as real

that they persecuted the daredevil philosopher for having attributed such a large volume to the day star, and all the authority of Pericles was needed to save him from being condemned to death and to commute his sentence to exile." (Flammarion, Etudes et lectures sur l'astronomie, p. 6).
If they held to such ideas in the fifth century before the Christian era, at the time of Greece's greatest intellectual prosperity, one cannot marvel at the ideas held by earliest humankind regarding the theory of the world. – Auth.
[2] Theogony: "An account of the origin of a god, goddess, or divine pantheon (Webster's, 1991, op. cit.) – Tr.

CHAPTER VI

General uranography[1]

Space and time • Matter • Laws and forces • The first creation • The universal creation • Suns and planets • Moons • Comets • The Milky Way • The fixed stars • The deserts of space • The eternal succession of worlds • Universal life • The diversity of worlds

Space and time

1. Many definitions of space have been given; the principal one is this: space is the expanse that separates two bodies. From this, certain sophists have concluded that where there were no bodies, there would be no space. This is what doctors of theology stood on to claim that space was necessarily finite, alleging that bodies, limited to a certain number, could not form an infinite series, and that where bodies ended, space would also end. Space has also been defined as: the place where worlds move about, the void in which matter acts, etc. Let us leave all such definitions – which do not define anything – in the treatises where they lie.

Space is one of those terms which represent a self-evident, primitive and axiomatic idea, and which the many definitions that may be given to it serve only to obscure. We all know what space is and I wish only to affirm its infiniteness so that in our subsequent studies there will be no barrier opposing the investigation of our objective.

Thus, I will state that space is infinite for the reason that it is impossible to imagine it as having any limit, and that, in spite of the difficulty we have in conceiving of the infinite, it is nevertheless easier for us to go on forever through space via thought than for us to stop at any point beyond which we would find no more expanse to traverse.

For us to picture the infiniteness of space with our limited faculties, let us suppose that upon leaving the earth – which is lost in the midst of the infinite – we head toward some point in the universe at the prodigious speed of an electric spark (which crosses *thousands of leagues each second*). Having barel y left this globe and yet, having traveled millions of leagues, we find ourselves in a place from which the earth appears as nothing more than a pale star. An instant later (always going in the same direction), we approach the far-off stars that you can hardly make out from your terrestrial station. And from there, not only is the earth lost to your sight in the depths of the heavens, but even your sun in its splendor has been eclipsed by the expanse that separates it from us. Always traveling at the same speed of light[2], we cross through systems of worlds at every step in which we proceed through the expanse – islands of ethereal light, starry ways and

magnificent landscapes, where God has sown worlds in the same profusion with which he sowed the plants on earth's prairies.
Now, it has only been a few minutes since we started and already hundreds of millions and millions of leagues separate us from the earth, thousands of worlds have passed under our eyes – yet, listen! In reality, we have not advanced one single step in the universe.
If we were to continue for years, centuries, thousands of centuries and millions of periods a hundred times as long as centuries, and *always at the same speed of light*, we would have advanced hardly at all! And thus it is, no matter where we might be and no matter to what point we might head from that invisible grain of sand which we left behind and which we call Earth.
That is what space is!
2. Time, like space, is a self-defining word. One can get a more exact idea of it by relating it to the infinite whole.
Time is the sequence of things. It is connected to eternity in the same way that things are connected to the infinite. Let us imagine we are at the beginning of our earth in that first epoch in which it had not yet moved under the divine impulse, i.e., at the beginning of Genesis. Time has not yet left the mysterious cradle of nature, and no one can say what age we are in, because the pendulum of time has not yet been set in motion.
But silence! The first hour of a lonely earth sounds at the eternal bell, the planet begins to move through space, and from then on there are *evening* and *morning*. Beyond earth, eternity remains impassive and unmoving, although time has been marching steadily forward on other worlds. On the earth, however, time replaces eternity, and over a given series of generations one will count the years and centuries.
Now let us transport ourselves to the final day of that earth, to the hour in which, bowed under the weight of old age, it will be erased from the book of life never to appear again. Here, the chain of events stops; the terrestrial movements that measure time cease and time ends with them.
This simple exposition of the natural things that have given birth to time, nourishing it and allowing it to stretch out, is enough to show that, from the point of view in which we must place ourselves for our investigation, time is but a drop of water that has fallen from a cloud into the sea and whose fall is measured.
There are as many worlds in the vast expanse as there are different and incongruent times. Outside these worlds, only eternity replaces such ephemeral sequences and peacefully fills the immensity of the heavens with its immovable light. Immensity without boundaries and eternity without bounds: such are the two great properties of the nature of the universe.
The eye of the observer, traversing the incommensurable distances of space without ever encountering an obstacle, and the eye of the geologist, piercing beyond the limits of the ages or descending into the depths of a wide-open eternity – where both will be lost someday – act in harmony, each

in its own way, to acquire this two-fold idea of the infinite: extent and duration.
Well then, holding to this order of ideas, it will be easy for us to realize that, in regards to time being simply the relationship between transitory things and depending solely on things that are measured, if we took earth's centuries as units and stacked them thousands upon thousands to form a colossal number, that number would never represent more than a point in eternity, in the same way that thousands of leagues added to thousands of leagues are nothing but a point in the extent of space.
Thus, for example, since centuries are outside the ethereal life of the soul, we could write a number as long as the earth's equator and imagine that we have aged by this number of centuries without our soul actually tallying one day more. And adding to this indefinable number of centuries another long series of similar numbers stretching from here to the sun – or even to a more considerable distance – and then imagining ourselves living over the course of the prodigious sequence of century-long periods represented by the sum of such numbers, once we came to the end of the inconceivable mountain of centuries that would weigh on our heads, it would be as if they did not exist at all: before us, all eternity would still remain.
Time is but a relative measure of the sequence of transitory things; eternity is not susceptible to any kind of measure from the point of view of duration; there is no beginning or end: for eternity the present is all there is.
If centuries of centuries are less than one second relative to eternity, what is to be said about a human life!

Matter

3. At first glance, nothing seems so profoundly varied, so essentially distinct, as the diverse substances that comprise the world. Among the objects that art or nature passes before us every day, are there any two that display a perfect identity, or even an equivalence of composition? Between the atmospheric gases and the vein of gold, and between the aqueous molecule of a cloud and the mineral that forms the osseous framework of the globe, what dissimilarity there is from the point of view of solidity, compressibility, weight and the many properties of bodies! Between the chemical tissue of the various plants that adorn the vegetable kingdom and the no-less numerous representatives of earth's animal kingdom, what diversity there is!
Nevertheless, we can establish as an absolute principle the fact that all substances, known and unknown, no matter how dissimilar they may seem, whether from the inner composition point of view or from the aspect of their reciprocal action, are in fact nothing more than different modes under which matter presents itself, nothing more than varieties into which it is transformed under the direction of the innumerable forces that govern it.
4. Chemistry, whose progress has been so rapid since my time, when its adherents still relegated it to the secret realm of magic, is a new science

that can rightly be regarded as being an offspring of the era of the observer, because it is uniquely based much more solidly on the experimental method than were its older siblings. Chemistry, I say, made good sport of the four primitive elements that the ancients agreed to recognize in nature; it showed that the element 'earth' is simply the combination of an infinitely varied diversity of substances; that air and water are also decomposable and are the products of a certain number of equivalents of gas; and that fire, far from being a principal element per se, is also only a state of matter resulting from the universal movement to which it is submitted and from a perceptible or latent combustion.

In return, chemistry discovered a considerable number of previously unknown principles which seemed to use certain combinations to form the diverse substances and the diverse bodies that chemistry studied, and which acted simultaneously, according to certain laws and in certain proportions, in the processes taking place in the great laboratory of nature. Chemistry labeled such principles *simple bodies*, thereby indicating that it regarded them as primitive and indecomposable, and that no operation, until the present, could reduce them further into relatively more simple components.[3]

5. However**,** where human perception stops, even aided by the most sensitive tools, the work of nature continues. There, where common folk take appearance for reality, where the professional lifts the veil and perceives the beginning of things, the eyes of those who are able to grasp the mode of action of nature see in the constitutive materials of the world only the one primitive, simple *cosmic matter,* which became diversified in certain regions at the time of their origin, and which was divided up into interdependent bodies possessing a life of their own only to become disassembled one day by their decomposition in the receptacle of the expanse of space.

6. There are questions that we ourselves – spirits who love science – would not know how to probe, and about which we could offer nothing but more or less conjectural personal opinions. Regarding such questions, I will either keep silent or justify my way of viewing them; however, this particular question is not one of them. Therefore, to those who would be tempted to see in my words only an audacious theory, I will say: Examine, if possible, the multiplicity of the operations in nature and you will realize that, if we do not accept the unity of matter, it will be impossible to explain not only the suns and the globes, but, without going so far, the germination of a seed in the ground or the production of an insect.

7. If we observe such a diversity in matter, it is because there were an unlimited number of forces that presided over its transformations, and since the conditions under which such transformations were produced were also unlimited in number, the varied combinations of matter could only be unlimited.

Thus, whether the substance being considered belongs to the fluids per se, i.e. the imponderable bodies, or whether it is dressed in the ordinary character and properties of matter, then in the whole universe there is only one single primitive substance: the *cosmos* or *cosmic matter* of the uranographers.

Laws and forces

8. If one of those unknown beings that spend their ephemeral existence in the depths of the darkest regions of the ocean; if one of those multi-stomached creatures, one of those nereids – those lowly microscopic creatures that do not know anything about nature except the ichthyophagous fish and submarine forests – were to suddenly receive the gift of intelligence, the ability to study its world and to establish on its evaluations an extensive conjectural reasoning process regarding the universality of things, what idea would it form about the living nature that develops in its environment and about the terrestrial world that does not belong to the field of its observations?

If now, by some marvelous effect of its new ability, this same being managed to rise from the eternal darkness to reach the surface of the ocean not far from the lush shores of a splendidly vegetated island bathed by the bountiful sun – the dispenser of salutary warmth – what would its opinion be about its previously-formed theory on the universal creation, a theory that it would immediately scrap in light of a broader evaluation, although still relatively as incomplete as the first? Such, O humans, is the picture of your completely speculative science.[4]

9. Thus, having come to address the issue of the laws and forces that govern the universe, I, who, like you, am only a being who is relatively ignorant in comparison to real knowledge, notwithstanding the apparent ascendancy – with respect to my brothers and sisters of earth – that gives me the ability to study questions of nature that are off-limits to them in their current position, my sole objective is to expose you to a general idea about the universal laws without explaining in detail the mode of action and the nature of the special forces that depend on them.

10. There is an ethereal fluid that fills space and penetrates bodies. This fluid is the *ether* or primitive *cosmic matter*, the generator of the universe and beings. Inherent to this ether are the forces that preside over the metamorphoses of matter, the immutable and necessary laws that govern the universe. These multiple forms, indefinably varied according to the combinations of matter, localized according to masses and diversified in their modes of action, depending on the circumstances and conditions, are known on earth as *gravity, cohesion, affinity, attraction, magnetism and electricity*. The vibratory movements of this agent are known as *sound, heat, light*, etc. On other worlds, they manifest under other aspects and display other characteristics unknown on this one, and in the immense expanse of the heavens, countless forces have been developed on an

unimaginable scale, and we are little able to evaluate their greatness, just as the crustacean in the depths of the ocean is unable to embrace the universality of terrestrial phenomena.[5]
Thus, in the same way that there is only one simple, primitive substance, the generator of all bodies, but in which its combinations are diversified, all such forces depend on a universal law which is diversified in its effects, and which, by eternal decree, was sovereignly imposed on creation to impress it with harmony and stability.
11. Nature has never contradicted itself. The emblem of the universe has only one motto: UNITY/DIVERSITY. Ascending the scale of worlds, *unity* in harmony and creation is found at the same time that an infinite diversity is found in the immense flowerbed of the stars. Traversing the degrees of life from the least of beings up to God, the grand law of continuity is recognized. In considering the forces per se, one can form a series, whose result, merging with the generatrix, is the universal law.
You cannot evaluate this law in its full extent, since the forces that represent it in the field of your observations are restricted and limited. However, gravity and electricity can be regarded as a broad application of the primordial law that reigns beyond the heavens.
All these forces are eternal – we will explain this term – and universal like the creation. Being inherent to the cosmic fluid, they necessarily act in everything everywhere, modifying their actions through their simultaneousness or successiveness; they predominate here; they wane there; they are powerful and active at certain points; latent or hidden at others; but ultimately, they prepare, guide, conserve and destroy worlds in their various stages of life, and they govern the marvelous works of nature wherever they take place, ensuring forevermore the eternal splendor of creation.

The first creation

12. After we have considered the universe from the general points of view concerning its composition, laws and properties, we can extend our study to the mode of formation that has given birth to the worlds and beings. Let us go back at this time to the creation of the earth in particular and its current state in the universality of things, and from there, taking it as a starting point and relative unit, we will proceed to our planetary and sidereal studies.
13. If we have rightly understood the relationship, or rather, the opposition between eternity and time; if we have familiarized ourselves with the idea that time is only a relative measure of the succession of transitory things, whereas eternity is essentially one, immovable, permanent and unsusceptible to any measurement from the point of view of duration, we will realize that for eternity there is neither beginning nor end.
On the other hand, if we get an exact idea – although necessarily very weak – of the infinitude of divine power, we will understand how it is possible that

the universe always has been and always will be. Ever since God has existed, his eternal perfections have also existed and have been articulated. Before time was born, incommensurable eternity received the divine word and impregnated space, eternal as the divine word itself.

14. God, by his nature having existed from all eternity, has created from all eternity, and it could not have been any other way. If such were not the case, no matter how far back in time we go through our imagination to the supposed limits of creation, there would always remain, beyond those limits, an eternity – ponder this thought well – an eternity during which the divine hypostases, the infinite volitions, would have been entombed in inactive and infertile mute lethargy, an eternity of seeming death for the eternal Father who gives life to beings, of an indifferent muteness for the Word that governs them, and of a cold and selfish sterility for the Spirit of love and vivification.

Let us grasp more fully the grandeur of the divine action and its perpetuity at the hand of the absolute Being! God is the sun of his creatures; he is the light of the world. Now, the appearing of the sun instantly gives birth to the waves of light that spread everywhere throughout the expanse of space, and in the same way, the universe, born from the Eternal, dates back to unimaginable periods of infinite duration to the *Fiat lux!* of the beginning.

15. The absolute beginning of things thus goes back to God. Their successive appearances in the realm of existence comprise the order of ongoing creation.

What mortal could tell of the unknown and superbly veiled glories under the night of the ages, glories that developed during those ancient times when none of the marvels of the current universe existed; in that primitive epoch when, the voice of the Lord having made itself heard, the materials that in the future would be arranged symmetrically and by themselves to form the temple of nature suddenly encountered one another in the bosom of the infinite void; in the moment when, at the sound of that mysterious voice, which each creature worships and cherishes as that of a mother’s, harmoniously varied notes were produced to vibrate together and modulate the concert of the vast heavens!

The world in its cradle was not yet established in its virility and fullness of life. No. The creative power never contradicts itself, and like all things, the universe was born as an infant. Endowed with the above-referenced laws and the initial impulse inherent to its formation, the primitive cosmic matter gives birth successively to vortices, agglomerations of that diffuse fluid, and accumulations of nebulous matter that were divided and modified ad infinitum to generate diverse centers of simultaneous or successive creations in the incommensurable regions of the expanse.

Due to the forces that predominated over one or the other, and due to the ulterior circumstances that presided over their development, these primitive centers became the focal points of a special life: some points, less disseminated in space and richer in principles and active energies, began

their individual stellar life at that time; others, occupying an unlimited expanse, grew with extreme slowness or divided anew into other secondary centers.

16. Transporting ourselves back only a few million centuries before the current epoch, our earth did not yet exist, nor had our solar system yet begun the evolutions of planetary life. Nevertheless, splendid suns already illumined the ether; inhabited planets already gave life and existence to a multitude of beings that preceded us in the human course; under the gaze of other eyes, opulent productions of an unknown nature and marvelous phenomena of the heavens comprised the scenes of an immense creation. What am I saying! Already, splendors that used to make the hearts of other mortals beat under the thought of the infinite power were no more! And we, poor tiny beings, who have come after an eternity of life, believe ourselves to be contemporaneous with creation!

Once more, let us comprehend nature more fully. Let us realize that eternity lies before as well as after us, that space is the theater of an unimaginable sequence and simultaneity of creations. Those nebulae, which we can barely make out in the farthest reaches of space, are clusters of suns in the process of formation; those others are galaxies of inhabited worlds; and still others are the sites of catastrophes or decline. Let us be aware that, just as we are placed in the midst of an infinity of worlds, we are also in the midst of a two-fold infinity of previous and subsequent duration; that universal creation is not restricted to us, and that we cannot apply that word [restricted] to the isolated formation of our tiny globe.

The universal creation

17. After having gone back – human limitations notwithstanding – to the hidden fount from which worlds derive like drops of water flowing from a river, let us consider the progression of the successive creations and their serial developments.

The primitive cosmic matter contained the material, fluidic and vital elements for all the universes that unroll their magnificence before eternity. It is the fertile mother of all things, the first grandmother, and what is more, the eternal generatrix. This substance from which all the sidereal globes have come has not disappeared; this power is not dead, for it still gives birth incessantly to new creations, and receives incessantly the reconstituted elements of the worlds that have been effaced from the book of eternity.

The ethereal matter, rarified to various degrees, and which is diffused throughout interplanetary space; that cosmic fluid that fills the universe, rarified to various degrees in the immense regions rich in clusters of stars; condensed to various degrees where the stellar sky does not yet shine; modified to various degrees by different combinations according to their locations in the expanse, is nothing more than the primitive substance in which reside the universal forces, from which nature has taken all things.[6]

18. This fluid penetrates bodies like an immense ocean. In it resides the vital principle that gives rise to the life of beings and perpetuates it on each globe according to its condition, a principle which in its latent state lies dormant as long as no voice calls upon it. By virtue of this universal vital principle, every creature, mineral, plant, animal or other – because there are many other kingdoms of nature whose existence you do not even suspect – knows how to appropriate the conditions for its existence and lifespan.

Mineral molecules have their portion of this life too, just like the seed and the embryo, and, like in the organism, they group together in symmetrical figures that constitute individualities.

It is very important to be aware of the idea that the primitive cosmic matter is endowed not only with the laws that ensure the stability of the worlds, but also with the universal vital principle that forms the spontaneous generations on each world to the extent that conditions manifest for the successive existence of beings, and when the hour sounds for the appearing of the children of life during the creation period.

This is how the universal creation has been accomplished. Hence, it is correct to say that, since the workings of nature are the expression of the divine will, God has always created, continues to create, and will create forever.

19. Up to this point, we have remained silent about the *spirit world*, which is also a part of creation and fulfills its destiny according to the august prescriptions of the Lord.

Concerning the way in which spirits are created, I can provide only a very restricted teaching due to my own ignorance, and, moreover, I must keep silent regarding certain issues, although I myself have been allowed to delve into them.

To those who are piously desirous to understand, and who are humble before God, I will say, begging them not to base any premature theory on my words: the spirit does not receive divine illumination, which gives it, along with free will and consciousness, the awareness of its higher destiny, without having passed through the divinely unavoidable series of lower beings, among which the labor of its individualization is slowly worked out. It is only from the day when the Lord imprints on its brow his august seal that the spirit takes its place in the ranks of humankind.

Once more, do not build your ideas upon my words, so sadly celebrated in the history of metaphysics; I would a thousand times prefer to remain silent about such lofty issues, which are far above our ordinary ponderings, than to lead you to distort the meaning of my teaching, and immerse you, through my fault, in the inextricable maze of deism or fatalism.

Suns and planets

20. Now, at some point in the universe, lost among the myriads of worlds, the cosmic matter condenses into the form of a huge nebula. This nebula is

animated by the universal laws that govern matter. In virtue of these laws – most notably the molecular force of attraction – it takes the shape of a spheroid, the only one that a mass of matter isolated in space can assume.
The circular movement, produced by the strictly equal gravity of all the molecular zones toward the center, soon modifies this primitive sphere to lead it, movement by movement, to the lenticular shape (we speak of the nebula as a whole).
21. Two new forces have arisen as a result of this rotational movement: centripetal force and centrifugal force, the former trying to pull all the zones to the center, the latter trying to move them away. Now, with the movement accelerating as the nebula condenses, and its radius increasing as it approaches the lenticular shape, the centrifugal force incessantly developed by these two causes soon predominates over the attraction at the center.
In the same way that a very fast movement of the sling breaks the cord and sets the projectile free to a great distance, the predominance of the centrifugal force detaches the equatorial circle from the nebula and from this ring forms a new mass isolated from the first, although subject to its control. This mass retains its equatorial movement, which, when modified, will become its movement of translation around the solar body. Furthermore, its new state gives it a rotational movement around its own center.
22. The generatrix nebula, which gave birth to this new world, has condensed and retaken its spherical shape. However, since the primitive heat developed by its diverse movements weakens extremely slowly, the phenomenon we have just described will be reproduced frequently and over an extended period as long as the nebula does not become dense or solid enough to offer any effective resistance to the modifications of shape that its movement of rotation successively imprints on it.
Consequently, the nebula will have given birth not to one heavenly body only, but to hundreds of worlds detached from the focal center, having sprung from the nebula through the mode of formation mentioned above. Now, each of these worlds, endowed like the original world with the natural forces that preside over the creation of universes, will engender subsequent new globes gravitating henceforth around it, just as it itself gravitates concurrently with its siblings around the focal point of their existence and life. Each one of these worlds will be a sun, the center of a vortex of planets exiting successively from its equator. These planets will receive a special, individual life, though dependent on the star that generated them.
23. Thus, planets are formed from masses of condensed matter that has not yet solidified, detached from the central mass by the action of centrifugal force, and by virtue of the laws of movement, taking on a spheroid shape that is more elliptical or less so, depending on the degree of fluidity they have retained. One of these planets will be Earth, which, before being cooled off and covered with a solid crust, will give birth to the moon

through the same process of astral formation to which it owes its own existence. The earth, henceforth inscribed in the book of life, will be the cradle for creatures whose weakness is protected under the wings of Divine Providence, a new string in the infinite harp that must resound in its place in the universal concert of the worlds.

Moons

24. Before the planetary masses had attained a degree of cooling sufficient for their solidification, smaller masses, veritable liquid globules, became detached from some at the equatorial plane, where the centrifugal force is greatest, and by virtue of the same laws, acquired a movement of translation around their generating planet, as had occurred with those planets around their generating central star.

This is how the earth gave birth to its moon, whose considerably lesser mass underwent a more rapid cooling. Now then, the laws and forces that presided over its detachment from the earth's equator and its movement of translation on the same plane acted in such a way that, instead of taking on a spheroid shape, it took on the shape of an ovoid globe, i.e., the elongated shape of an egg, whose center of gravity would be fixed in the lower part.

25. The conditions under which the detachment of the moon was effected allowed it barely to pull away from the earth, and constrained it to remain perpetually suspended in earth's sky like an ovoid figure, whose heaviest parts formed the lower face turned toward the earth, and whose less dense parts comprised the top, if one means the side opposite the earth and pointed toward the heavens. This is what makes this heavenly body always show the same side to us. To better understand its geological state, it can be pictured as being a ball of cork, whose base, turned toward the earth, would be made of lead.

Thus, there are two essentially distinct natures to the moon's surface: one without any possible similarity to ours because its fluidic and ethereal bodies are unknown; the other, light in relation to the earth, since all the less-dense substances settled in that hemisphere. The former, perpetually turned toward the earth, without water or atmosphere, except maybe here and there at the boundaries of this sub-terrestrial hemisphere; the latter, rich in fluids, perpetually turned away from our world.[7]

26. The number and state of the moons of each planet varied in accordance with the special conditions under which they were formed. Some planets did not give birth to any secondary heavenly body, as is the case of Mercury, Venus and Mars,[8] while others like Earth, Jupiter, Saturn, etc., formed one or more.

27. Besides its own satellites or moons, the planet Saturn displays the special phenomenon of its ring system[9], which, seen from afar, appears to encircle it like a white aureole. This formation is a new demonstration of the universality of the laws of nature. The ring is actually the result of a separation effectuated on Saturn's equator in primitive times, in the same

way that an equatorial zone escaped the earth to form its satellite. The difference is that Saturn's ring is formed in all of its parts of homogenous molecules, probably already in a certain degree of condensation, and could thereby continue its rotational movement in the same way and within a time almost equal to that which animates the planet. If one of the points of this ring had been denser than another, one or many agglomerations of substances would have suddenly occurred and Saturn would have had many more moons. Since the time of its formation, this ring has solidified in the same way as the other planetary bodies.

Comets

28. Wandering heavenly bodies – even more so than the planets that have retained that etymological label – comets are the guides that will help us cross the boundaries of the system to which the earth belongs in order to carry us to far-off regions in the sidereal expanse.

But before exploring the heavenly realms with the aid of these travelers of the universe, it would be good to understand – as much as possible – their intrinsic nature and their role in the planetary economy.

29. These bearded heavenly bodies have often been seen as being infant worlds, brewing in their primordial chaos the conditions for life and existence that are bestowed on the inhabited worlds. Others have imagined these extraordinary bodies to be worlds in a state of destruction, and for many, their striking appearance has been the subject of erroneous speculation concerning their nature, so much so that, even in judicial astrology, some used to regard them as portents of disasters sent by providential decrees to the astonished and trembling earth.

30. The law of variety is applied with such great profusion in the works of nature that one wonders how naturalists, astronomers and philosophers could have erected so many theories to give comets a status equivalent to planetary bodies, and to see them as nothing but heavenly bodies in a greater or lesser degree of development or decay. However, the pictures of nature should be ample enough to keep the observer from the need to look for relationships that do not exist, and to leave to comets the humble but useful role of wandering heavenly bodies serving as scouts for the solar domains. Because the heavenly bodies of which they are made are altogether different from that of planetary bodies, they do not have, like them, the purpose of serving as dwellings for humanities. They travel successively from sun to sun, enriching themselves at times with planetary fragments reduced to the state of vapor, drawing to themselves the vivifying and renewing principles that they shed over terrestrial worlds. (chap. IX, no. 12)

31. If, when one of those heavenly bodies approaches our tiny globe to traverse its orbit and return to its apogee located at an incommensurable distance from the sun, we were to follow it through thought to visit with it the sidereal regions, we would cross this prodigious expanse of ethereal

matter that separates the sun from the closest stars, and in observing the combined movements of this heavenly body – which we could imagine as being astray in the desert of the infinite – we would find there another eloquent proof of the universality of the laws of nature carried out at distances that the most active imagination can hardly conceive.

There, the elliptical form takes on the parabolic form and its progress is slowed down to the point that the comet travels only a few yards in the same amount of time which, at its perigee, it traveled many thousands of miles. Perhaps a more powerful sun, more important than the one that it has just left behind, will exercise over this comet a preponderant attraction and receive it into the ranks of its own subjects, and then the confused children of your tiny earth will wait in vain for its return, which they had predicted through incomplete observations. In that case, we, whose thought has followed the wandering comet in those unknown regions, will encounter a new nation, impossible for earthly eyes to find, unimaginable for the spirits who inhabit the earth, inconceivable even to their thought, because it will be the theater of unexplored marvels.

We have arrived at the stellar world, that dazzling world of vast suns which radiate in infinite space, and which are the brilliant flowers of the magnificent grounds of creation. Only there will we know what the earth is.

The Milky Way

32. On beautiful, moonless, starry nights, everyone can see that whitish glow which crosses the heavens from one end to the other, and which the ancients dubbed the Milky Way due to its milky appearance. That diffuse glow has long been explored in modern times by the eye of the telescope, and that path of gold dust, or that stream of milk of ancient mythology, has become a vast field of unknown marvels. The research of observers has led to the understanding of its nature, and has revealed that there, where the eye gets lost and would encounter only a weak luminosity, there are millions of suns more luminous and important than the one that illuminates us.

33. In fact, the Milky Way is a prairie sown with solar or planetary flowers that shine throughout it enormous expanse. Our sun and all the bodies that accompany it are part of those resplendent orbs that form the Milky Way. However, the sun, notwithstanding its gigantic proportions in relation to earth and the magnitude of its domain, occupies only an inappreciable dot in this vast creation. One can count some thirty million similar suns gravitating in that immense region at a distance from each other greater than one hundred thousand times the radius of the earth’s orbit.[10] [11]

34. By this approximate calculation one can judge the extent of that sidereal region and the relation that unites our system to the universality of other systems that occupy it. One can also judge the smallness of the sun’s domain; even more so, the nothingness of our tiny earth. What would earth be, then, if one were to consider the beings that people the Milky Way!

I say “nothingness” because our determinations apply not only to the material and physical extent of the bodies we are studying – that would not be much – but also and above all to their moral state as a place, and the rank they occupy in the eternal hierarchy of beings. Creation is displayed there in all its majesty, engendering and propagating the manifestations of life and intelligence all around the solar world and in each one of the systems that surround it on all sides.

35. In this way, one can understand the position occupied by our sun or the earth in the world of stars. Such considerations will carry even more weight if one were to reflect on the status of the Milky Way itself, which, in the immensity of sidereal creations, represents only an unperceivable and unappreciable point when seen from afar, because it is nothing more than one stellar nebula among the thousands existing in space. If it seems vaster and richer to us than others, it is only because it surrounds us and unfolds in all its reaches before our eyes, whereas the others, lost in the unfathomable depths, barely let themselves be glimpsed.

36. Well, if one knows that the earth is nothing or almost nothing within the solar system; the solar system is nothing or almost nothing within the Milky Way; the Milky Way is nothing or almost nothing within the universality of nebulae, and because this universality is itself a very small thing within the immense infinite, one will begin to understand what the terrestrial globe is.

The fixed stars

37. The so-called “fixed” stars that constellate the two hemispheres of the firmament are not isolated from all outside attraction, as is generally assumed. Far from it: they all belong to one and the same agglomeration of stellar bodies. This agglomeration is nothing other than a large nebula of which we are part, and whose equatorial plane, projected throughout the sky, has received the name “Milky Way.” All the suns comprising it are in solidarity; their multiple influences continually react upon each other and universal gravity unites all of them in the same family.

38. Among those diverse suns, most are like ours, encircled by secondary worlds that they illuminate and support by means of the same laws that preside over life in our own planetary system. Some, like Sirius, are thousands of times richer and more magnificent in size than ours, and their role in the universe is more important, just as the planets that revolve around them are greater in number and far more advanced than ours. Others are very dissimilar in their stellar functions. It is thus that a certain number of these suns, true twins in the sidereal order, are accompanied by their same-aged siblings and form in space dual systems, to which nature has given functions that are different than those pertaining to our sun.[12] There, years are no longer measured by the same periods, or the days by the same suns, and those worlds, illuminated by a double torch, have received as their inheritance conditions of an existence unimaginable to those who have not left this tiny terrestrial world.

Other stars, without entourage and deprived of planets, have received better elements of habitability than those granted to others. In their immensity, the laws of nature are diversified and if unity is the grand word of the universe, infinite diversity is no less its eternal attribute.

39. In spite of the prodigious number of these stars and their systems, and despite the incommensurable distances that separate them, they all nonetheless belong to the same stellar nebula, which the eyes of the most powerful telescopes can barely traverse and which the most daring conceptions of the imagination can barely reach. Nevertheless, this nebula is only one unit in the order of the nebulae that comprise the stellar world.

40. The so-called fixed stars are not immovable in the expanse. The constellations that have been imagined in the canopy of the firmament are not at all real symbolic creations. Their *distance* from the earth and the perspective from which the universe is measured from this station are the two causes for this two-fold optical illusion (Chap. V, No. 12).

41. We have seen that the totality of the heavenly bodies that sparkle in the bluish dome is enclosed within one and the same cosmic agglomeration, within one and the same nebula that you call the Milky Way. However, despite belonging to the same group, each one of these heavenly bodies is nonetheless animated by its own movement of translation through space. Absolute repose does not exist anywhere. They are governed by the universal laws of gravitation and they roll through the expanse under the incessant impulse of that immense force. They do not at all roll along random routes, but along set orbits whose center is occupied by a much larger heavenly body. To make my words more comprehensible through an example, I will speak specifically of your sun.

42. Through modern observations, it is known that the sun has neither a fixed nor central place as was believed in the early days of the new astronomy, but that it travels through space, carrying along with it its vast system of planets, moons and comets.

This journey is not fortuitous and the sun does not wander around the infinite void, led astray from the regions assigned to it, its children and its subjects. No, its orbit is measured, and concurrently with other suns of the same order and surrounded by a certain number of inhabited planets, it gravitates around a central sun. Its gravitational movement, like that of its sister suns, is imperceptible to annual observations, because a large number of century-long periods would hardly be sufficient to mark out the time of one such stellar year.

43. The central sun of which we speak is itself a secondary globe with respect to another still more important one, around which it continues a slow and measured journey in the company of other suns of the same order.

We could dwell on this successive subordination of suns to other suns until our imagination becomes weary of climbing up such a hierarchy, but let us not forget that we can count in round numbers some thirty million suns in

the Milky Way that are subordinate to one another like gigantic cogwheels of an immense system.

44. And these heavenly bodies, uncountable in number, each live a life in solidarity with the others; in the same way that nothing is isolated in the economy of your tiny terrestrial world, so also nothing is isolated in the incommensurable universe.

Such systems of systems would appear from afar to the investigative eye of the philosopher who could grasp the picture developed by space and time as dust of golden pearls lifted into vortexes by the divine breath, which makes the sidereal worlds fly through the heavens like grains of sand on the dunes of the desert.

More stillness, more silence, more nightfall! The grand spectacle of the kind that would unfold before our eyes would be the real creation, immense and full of the ethereal life that embraces in its immense whole the infinite gaze of the Creator.

However, up to this point we have spoken only about one nebula; its millions of suns, its millions of inhabited worlds, as we have said, form only one island in the infinite archipelago.

The deserts of space

45. An immense unbounded desert extends beyond and envelops the agglomeration of stars that we have been discussing. Solitude follows solitude, and the incommensurable plains of the void extend in the distance. Masses of cosmic matter are found isolated in space like floating islands of an enormous archipelago. If in some way one would want to surmise the enormous distance that separates the agglomeration of stars of which we are part from the agglomerations that are closest to us, one would have to understand that these stellar islands are scattered and rare in the vast ocean of the heavens, and that the expanse that separates them from each other is incomparably greater than the measurement of their respective dimensions.

Now, let us remember that the stellar nebula measures in rounded-off numbers one thousand times the distance to the closest star taken as a unit, that is, some one hundred thousand trillion leagues [one league is three miles]. Being much vaster, the distance that extends between them cannot be expressed by numbers accessible to the comprehension of our minds; only the imagination in its highest conceptions is capable of overcoming that prodigious immensity – those solitudes mute and deprived of all appearance of life – and conceiving in some way an idea of this relative infinity.

46. This celestial desert, however, which envelops our sidereal universe and which seems to extend itself as the far-off confines of our stellar world, is embraced by the vision and infinite power of the Most High, who, beyond the heavens of our skies, has developed the framework of his unlimited creation.

47. Indeed, beyond such vast areas of isolation, worlds radiate in their magnificence as much as they do in the regions that are accessible to human examination. Beyond these deserts, splendid oases float in the limpid ether and ceaselessly renew the marvelous settings of existence and life. There, far-off aggregations of cosmic substance unfold, which the keen eye of the telescope glimpses through the transparent regions of our sky: those nebulae that you call irresolvable, and which seem to you like light clouds of white powder lost in an unknown point of ethereal space. There, new worlds are revealed and developed, whose varied and unfamiliar conditions, different from those inherent to your globe, give them a life that your conceptions cannot imagine, nor your studies ascertain. It is there that the creative power glows in all its fullness. To someone who comes from the regions occupied by your system, where forces of other laws are in action governing the manifestations of life, the new path that we follow in these foreign regions opens unknown perspectives to us.[13]

The eternal succession of worlds

48. We have seen that a unique, primordial and general law has been bestowed on the universe to ensure its eternal stability, and that this general law is perceptible to our senses through various particular actions, which we call the guiding forces of nature. Today, we are going to show that the harmony of the entire world, considered from the dual aspect of eternity and space, is secured by this supreme law.

49. In fact, if we went back to the early origin of the original agglomerations of cosmic substance, we would notice that, under the rule of this law, matter is already undergoing the necessary transformations that lead it from the seed to the ripe fruit, and that, under the impulse of the various forces born from this law, it moves along the scale of its periodic revolutions: first, a fluidic center of motion; next, a generator of worlds; later, a central and attractive nucleus of spheres that were born in its midst. We already know that those laws presided over the history of the cosmos. What is now important to know is that they also preside over the destruction of heavenly bodies, because death is not only a metamorphosis of the living being, but also a transformation of inanimate matter. And if it is true to say literally that life is only accessible to the scythe of death, it is also correct to add that in the case of matter it too must necessarily undergo the transformations inherent to its constitution.

50. Take a world which, ever since its primitive cradle, has strode the entire span of years that its special organization allowed. The inner core of its existence has become extinct and its elements have lost their initial capability. The phenomena of nature, demanding for their production the presence and action of the forces assigned to this world, henceforth can no longer present themselves, because the lever of their activity no longer has the fulcrum that gave it all its power.

Now, would one think that this extinct and lifeless world would continue to gravitate within celestial space without purpose and become useless ash in the vortex of the heavens? Would one think that it will remain written in the book of universal life when it has become no more than a dead letter empty of all meaning? No. The same laws that raised it up from the dark chaos and endowed it with the splendors of life, the same forces which governed it throughout the centuries of its adolescence, which consolidated the first steps of its existence and which led it to adulthood and old age, will preside over the disaggregation of its constitutive elements in order to turn them over to the laboratory whence the creative power unceasingly draws the conditions for general stability. These elements will return to the common mass of the ether to be assimilated into other bodies or to regenerate other suns; and such death will not be a pointless event for either this world or its siblings. In other regions it will renew other creations of a different nature, and there, where the systems of worlds have vanished, a new flowerbed of more brilliant and fragrant flowers will soon be born.

51. Thus, the real and effective eternity of the universe is ensured by the same laws that direct the operations of time; this way, worlds succeed worlds and suns succeed suns, without the immense mechanism of the vast heavens being ever reached in its gigantic workings.

There, where your eyes admire the splendid stars in the canopy of the night; there, where your mind contemplates magnificent radiances that shine from far away places, the finger of death has long extinguished many such splendors; the void has long succeeded such radiances and even received new creations yet unknown. The immense distance of these heavenly bodies, over which the light they have sent has taken thousands of years to reach us, means that today we are only receiving rays that they sent long before the creation of the earth, and which we will still admire for thousands of years after their actual disappearance.[14]

What are the six thousand years of historical humanity compared with the eons? Like seconds in your centuries? What are your astronomical observations compared with the absolute state of the world? A shadow eclipsed by the sun.

52. Hence, here, as in our other studies, let us realize that the earth and humankind are nothing compared to what is, and that the most colossal efforts of our thought cover but an imperceptible area in light of the immensity and eternity of a universe that will never end.

And when these periods of our immortality will have passed over our heads, when the current history of the earth will have looked to us like a vaporous mist in the depths of our memory, when we will have inhabited for uncountable centuries the various degrees of our cosmological hierarchy, and when the most distant domains of future ages will have been traveled by us in innumerable pilgrimages, the unlimited succession of worlds and the immovable eternity will still lie before us as our perspective.

Universal life

53. The immortality of souls, of which the system of the physical world is the foundation, has seemed fanciful to the eye of certain prejudiced thinkers. Ironically, they have classified it as vagrant immortality and have not understood that it is true only in light of the spectacle of the creation. Nevertheless, it is possible to make all its grandeur understood – I would say even further, nearly all its perfection.

54. That the works of God are created for thought and intelligence, that the worlds are dwellings for beings who contemplate them and discover behind their veil the power and wisdom of the One who forms them – this issue is no longer in doubt; however, that the souls who populate them are in solidarity with one another, this is what is important to understand.

55. Indeed, the human mind finds it difficult to consider those radiant globes that sparkle in the expanse as simple masses of inert, lifeless matter. It also finds it difficult to think that there are, in such distant regions, magnificent twilights and splendorous nights, fertile suns and days filled with light, and valleys and mountains, where the multiple productions of nature have unfolded in all their luxurious splendor. It is hard for them to imagine, I would say, that the divine spectacle, wherein the soul can re-temper itself, may be deprived of any existence or any thinking being that could acknowledge it.

56. But to this eminently just idea of creation it is necessary to add that of the solidarity of humankind, and therein lies the mystery of future eternity. One and the same human family has been created in the universality of worlds, and the ties of a fraternity still inappreciable by you have been bestowed on these worlds. *If these heavenly bodies, which are harmonized in their vast systems, are inhabited by intelligent beings, it is not at all by beings unknown to one another, but rather, by beings marked on their brow by the same destiny, and who must meet one another momentarily according to their life functions and meet again according to their mutual affinities*; it is the great family of spirits who populate the celestial lands; it is the great radiance of the Divine Spirit who embraces the expanse of the heavens and who remains as the first and final archetype of spiritual perfection.

57. By what odd aberration have we believed we should deny immortality to the vast regions of the ether, containing it within an inadmissible boundary and within an absolute duality? Should not a true theory of the world therefore precede true dogmatic doctrine, and should not science precede theology? Will it deviate so much as to establish its basis on metaphysics? The answer is simple and shows us that the new philosophy will sit triumphantly upon the ruins of the old, because its foundation will be victoriously erected upon ancient errors.

The diversity of worlds

58. You have accompanied us on our celestial excursions and you have visited with us the immense regions of space. Under our eyes, suns have succeeded suns, systems have succeeded systems, and nebulae have succeeded nebulae. The splendid panorama of the harmony of the cosmos has unfolded before our steps and we have received a foretaste of the idea of the infinite, which only with our future perfectibility will we be able to comprehend in its full extent. The mysteries of the ether have disclosed their enigmas, till now undecipherable, and we at least have conceived of the idea of the universality of things. Now it is important for us to pause and reflect.

59. Without a doubt, it is good to have realized the smallness of the earth and its mediocre importance in the hierarchy of worlds. It is good to have struck down the human presumption that is so dear to us, and to have humbled ourselves before the absolute grandeur; however, it will be better still to morally interpret the spectacle that we have witnessed. I would like to speak of the infinite power of nature and the idea we ought to have about its mode of action in the diverse parts of the vast universe.

60. Accustomed as we are to judging things by our poor, small dwelling place, we imagine that nature could not or must not have acted on other worlds except according to the rules that we recognize down here. Now, it is precisely in this that it is important for us to reform our judgment.

Cast your gaze for an instant on any one region of your globe and on one of the productions of your nature. Do you not recognize there the seal of an infinite variety and the proof of an unequaled activity? Do you not see in the wing of a canary or in the petal of a rosebud in bloom the extraordinary fecundity of such beautiful nature?

May your studies be applied to the beings that soar through the air; may they descend to the violet growing in the woods; may they break open the depths of the ocean; in everything and everywhere you will read this universal truth: all-powerful nature acts according to places, times and circumstances. It is one in its overall harmony but multiple in its productions. It plays with a sun as with a drop of water, and it peoples an immense world with living beings with the same ease that it hatches the egg laid by the autumn butterfly.

61. Now then, if such is the variety that nature has been able to portray to us in all places of this small world, so narrow and limited, how much broader should you consider this mode of action when pondering the perspectives of vaster worlds! How much more developed and lush you must recognize nature to be, operating in those marvelous worlds which, much more than the earth, attest to its unknowable perfection!

Thus, do not see systems similar to your own planetary system revolving around each one of the suns in space; do not see on those unknown planets the three kingdoms of nature that display themselves around you. Instead, think that, just as no human face looks like any other face in the entire

human species, a prodigious, unimaginable diversity is also manifested in the ethereal dwelling places that float in the bosom of space.

From the fact that your animate nature begins with the zoophyte to culminate with the human being; that the atmosphere nourishes terrestrial life; that the liquid element constantly renews it; that your seasons make succeed in this life the phenomena that divide it up, do not conclude that the millions and millions of earths that float in the spatial expanse are similar to this one. Far from it. They differ according to the diverse conditions that have been assigned to them and according to their respective roles in the scenario of the universe. They are the diversified jewels in an immense mosaic, the diverse flowers in a remarkable flowerbed.

[1] This chapter was textually extracted from a series of communications dictated to the Parisian Spiritist Society in 1862 and 1863 under the title: Uranographical Studies, signed by GALILEO. Medium: Mr. C.F. – Auth. [The initials C.F. stand for Camille Flammarion, 1842–1925, French astronomer and author. – Tr.]

[2] In 1983 the 17th General Conference on Weights and Measures (Conférence Générale des Poids et Mesures) adopted a standard value of 299,792,458 meters/sec. for the speed of light. In imperial units, that is about 186,282.397 miles/sec., or roughly one foot/ nanosecond. Source: www.bipm.org. – Tr.

[3] The main simple bodies are: among the non-metallic ones, oxygen, hydrogen, nitrogen, chlorine, carbon, phosphorous, sulfur and iodine; among the metallic ones, gold, silver, platinum, mercury, lead, pewter, zinc, iron, copper, arsenic, sodium, potassium, calcium, aluminum, etc. – Auth.

[4] Such is also the situation of those who deny the world of spirits, when, after they rid themselves of their corporeal envelope, the horizons of that world are exposed to their eyes. They then understand the emptiness of the theories by which they claimed to explain everything solely through matter. Nevertheless, even those horizons hold for them mysteries that are revealed only progressively to the degree that they evolve by means of purification. From their first steps in that new world, however, they are forced to acknowledge their blindness and their distance from the truth. – Auth.

[5] We all relate to what we know, and we do not comprehend what escapes the perception of our senses, any more than a person blind from birth would understand the effects of light and the usefulness of the eyes. Thus, it may be that in other environments the cosmic fluid could have properties and combinations about which we have no idea, effects that are appropriate for necessities unknown to us, giving way to new perceptions or other modes of perception. For example, we do not understand how the eyes of the body could see without light. But who could say that there are not other agents besides light for which special organs are intended? Somnambulistic sight, which is not hindered by distance, material obstacles or darkness, offers us an example. Let us suppose that, on a given world, the beings are normally what our somnambulists are only exceptionally; they have need of neither our light nor our eyes, but nonetheless, they see what we cannot. The same applies to all the other senses. Conditions for vitality and perceptibility, sensations and necessities, vary according to the environment. – Auth.

[6] If one were to ask what the beginning of these forces was and how such beginning could be in the very substance that produced it, we would respond that mechanics offers numerous examples. Is not elasticity, which enables a spring to be stretched, in the spring itself and does it not depend on the way the molecules are arranged? Bodies that obey the centrifugal force receive their impulse from the first movement exerted on them. – Auth.

[7] This entirely new theory about the moon explains, through the law of gravity, the reason why this heavenly body always shows the same face to the earth. Its center of gravity, instead of being at the center of the sphere, rests on one of the points on its surface, and consequently, attracted toward the earth by a force greater than the lighter parts, the moon would produce the effect of one of those figures commonly called poussahs [Roly Polies or Bop Bags in the U.S. – Tr.], whose heavier base makes them always pop right back up, whereas the planets, whose center of gravity is at equal distances from their surface, turn regularly on their axis. The gaseous or liquid vivifying fluids, as a consequence of their specific lightness, would be found accumulated in the upper hemisphere continuously turned away from the earth. The lower hemisphere (the only one we see) would be

devoid of such fluids, and therefore inappropriate for life, while it would reign on the other. Hence, if the upper hemisphere is inhabited, its inhabitants have never seen the earth, unless they traveled to the other hemisphere, something impossible for them if there are no conditions indispensable to life. As rational and scientific as this theory may be, since it cannot yet be confirmed by any direct observation, it can be accepted only as a hypothesis and as an idea that can serve as a reference to science. It must be agreed that it is the only one at this time that gives a satisfactory explanation for the particularities this globe displays. – Auth.

[8] This was written before the 1877 discovery of the two moons of Mars, Phobos and Deimos – Tr.

[9]The rings of Saturn have puzzled astronomers since Galileo Galilei discovered them with his telescope in 1610. Detailed study by the Voyager 1 and Voyager 2 spacecraft in the 1980s only increased the mystery.
There are thousands of rings made of up billions of particles of ice and rock. The particles range in size from a grain of sugar to the size of a house. The rings are believed to be pieces of comets, asteroids or shattered moons that broke up before they reached the planet. Each ring orbits at a different speed around the planet. Source: http://solarsystem.nasa.gov/planets/profile.cfm?Object=Saturn&Display=Rings – Tr.

[10]More than 3 trillion 400 billion leagues [one league equals 3 miles]. – Auth.

[11] Earth's orbit is not a perfect circle. The earth is slightly closer to the sun in early January and farther away in July. In January, the earth is 91.4 million miles (147.1 million kilometers) from the sun, and in July it is 94.5 million miles (152.1 million kilometers) away. Source: http://www.nasa.gov/worldbook/earth_worldbook.html – Tr.

[12] In astronomy, these have been labeled "binary stars." They are two suns that revolve around each other like a planet around its sun. What a peculiar and magnificent show must be enjoyed by the inhabitants of the worlds that comprise these systems illuminated by a binary sun! But also, how different the conditions of life must be there! In a later communication, the spirit of Galileo added: "There are also systems that are more complicated, in which different suns play, face to face with each other, the role of moons. Thus, they produce marvelous light shows for the inhabitants of the globes they illuminate. In fact, despite their apparent proximity, inhabited worlds can revolve between them and alternately receive diversely-colored light waves, which combine to form white light." – Auth.

[13] In astronomy, the name irresolvable nebulae is given to those in which the stars comprising them cannot yet be distinguished. They had at first been considered as accumulations of cosmic matter in the process of condensation to form worlds, but today it is generally thought that such appearance is due to their distance, and that with sufficiently powerful instruments, they would all be solvable.
Though very imperfect, a familiar comparison can provide an idea about solvable nebulae: these are like groups of sparks projected by fireworks at the moment they explode. Each one of these sparks would represent a star and the group would be the nebula or group of stars gathered at a point in space and subject to a common law of attraction and movement. Seen at a certain distance, these sparks can barely be distinguished, and their group has the appearance of a tiny cloud of smoke. This comparison would not be precise if it dealt with masses of condensed cosmic matter.
Our Milky Way is one of such nebula; it contains almost 30 million stars or suns that now occupy no less than some hundreds of trillions of leagues of expanse; nonetheless, it is not the largest. Let us suppose only an average of 20 planets revolving around each sun: that would make about 600 million worlds just in our group.
If we could travel from our nebula to another, there we would be as if in the midst of our Milky Way, but with a starry sky of a completely different appearance, which, in spite of its colossal dimensions in relation to us, would seem in the distance like a tiny lenticular flake lost in the infinite. But before reaching the new nebula, we would be like a traveler who leaves a city and travels through a vast uninhabited country before arriving at another city. We would have crossed incommensurable spaces devoid of stars and worlds, which Galileo calls the deserts of space. As we proceed, we would see our own nebula receding behind us, decreasing in size to our eyes at the same time that the one toward which we are traveling becomes more and more distinct, similar to the mass of sparks from the fireworks shell. As we traveled through thought to the regions of space beyond the archipelago of our own nebula, we would see all around us millions of similar archipelagos of different shapes, each containing millions of suns and hundreds of millions of inhabited worlds.
Everything that might identify us with the immensity of the expanse and the structure of the universe is useful for broadening our ideas, so restricted by common beliefs. God grows before our eyes to the degree that we better comprehend the grandeur of his works and our insignificance. We have come a

long way, as one can see, from the belief instilled by the Mosaic Genesis, which makes our tiny, imperceptible earth the main creation of God, and its inhabitants the sole objects of his solicitude. We understand the vanity of those who believe that everything in the universe was made for them, and of those who dare dispute the existence of the Supreme Being. Within a few centuries, one will be astonished that a religion made to glorify God lowered God to such petty proportions, and that it rejected as being the conception of the spirit of evil the discoveries that could only increase our admiration of God's omnipotence by initiating us into the magnificent mysteries of creation. One will be astonished even further at becoming aware that these discoveries were rejected because they would have emancipated the spirit of humankind and eradicated the preponderance of those who called themselves the representatives of God on earth. – Auth.

[14] Here is the result of the time that it takes light to travel through space. Since its velocity is 70,000 leagues per second [a league equals 3 miles], it reaches us from the sun in 8 minutes and 13 seconds. Thus, if a phenomenon occurred on the sun's surface, we would not perceive it until 8 minutes later, and for the same reason, we would still see the event 8 minutes after it had ceased. If because of its distance the light of a star took one thousand years to reach us, we would see the star only one thousand years after its formation (For a complete explanation and description of this phenomenon, see Revue Spirite, Mar. and May of 1867, pp. 93 and 151, account rendered in Lumen, by C. Flammarion) – Auth.

CHAPTER VII

A geological sketch of the earth

The geological periods • The primitive state of the globe • The primary period • The transition period • The secondary period • The tertiary period • The diluvial period • The post-diluvial or present period - The birth of humankind

The geological periods

1. The earth carries within it the obvious traces of its formation. The phases can be tracked with mathematical precision in the different formations that make up its framework. The whole of such studies composes the science called *geology*, a science born during this century [19th], and which has cast light on the highly controversial issue of the origin of the earth and the living beings inhabiting it. On this point there is no theory; it is the strict result of the observation of the facts, and in light of such facts there is no room for doubt. The history of the globe's formation is written in the geological strata much more surely than in preconceived books, because it is nature herself that speaks, that bares herself, and not the imagination of persons who create theories. Where one sees the marks of fire, one can safely say that there has been a fire; where one sees the marks of water, one can no less surely say that there has been water; where one sees marks of animals, one can say that animals have lived there.

Geology is thus a completely observational science; it draws conclusions only from what it sees; on questionable points, it affirms nothing: it forgoes arguable opinions, waiting for more complete observations. *Without the discoveries of geology – as without those of astronomy – the world's genesis would still be dwelling in the darkness of legend.* Thanks to geology, people today know the history of their habitation, and the scaffolding of the fables that used to surround its cradle has crumbled, never to rise again.

2. Everywhere in terrains[1] where there are trenches, natural or man-made excavations, one may observe what are called *stratifications*, i.e., superposed strata. The terrains that display this pattern are designated by the name *stratified terrains.* These strata, of highly variable thickness from a few centimeters to 100 meters or more, are distinguished from one another by the color and nature of the substances composing them. Works of art, the drilling of wells, quarry operations, and, above all, mines have made it possible to observe them to a very great depth.

3. The strata are usually homogenous; that is, each is formed of the same substance, or of various substances that existed together and formed a compact whole. The line of demarcation that separates them from one another is always clearly defined, like the layers of a foundation of a building; in no part does one see them mixed and lost in one another at their respective boundaries, as occurs, for example, in the colors of a prism or a rainbow.

By these characteristics, one can see that they were formed successively and were deposited one on top of the other under different conditions and by different causes. The deepest ones, of course, formed first, and those closer to the surface, afterward. The last of all of them – that which is found at the surface – is called the vegetative stratum, which owes its properties to the decayed remains of organic matter coming from plants and animals.

4. In geology, the lower layers underneath the vegetative strata are called *rock strata*, a name which in this context does not always imply the idea of a rocky substance, but means a bed or bank made of some kind of mineral substance. Some are composed of sand, clay, marl[2] or gravel; others are composed of actual stone of varying hardness, such as sandstone, marble, chalk, limestone or calcareous rock, grindstone, coal, asphalt, etc. It is said that a rock is harder or less hard according to its density.

By examining the nature of these rocks or strata one can recognize certain signs indicating that some have come from molten matter, and, at times, vitrified by the action of fire; others, from earth-like substances deposited by water. Some of these substances remain disaggregated, such as sand; others, initially in a pasty state due to the action of certain chemical agents or other causes, hardened and acquired the consistency of stone over time. The layers of superposed stone are evidence of successive deposits. Fire and water therefore have played their part in forming the materials that compose the solid framework of the globe.

5. The normal position of the earthy or stony layers coming from aqueous deposits is horizontal. When one sees those plains, which at times extend to be lost from view, and which are perfectly horizontal and compacted as if they had been leveled with a roller, or those deep valleys that are as flat as the surface of a lake, one can be certain that at some time in the remote past such places were for a long time covered by placid waters, which, upon withdrawing, left dry the soils they had deposited during their stay. When the waters receded, these soils became covered with vegetation. When, instead of the slimy**,** limy, clayish or marly soils – so appropriate for assimilating the nutritive principles – the waters deposited nothing but silicate sand, which would not agglomerate, we end up with the sandy, arid plains that make up moors[3] and deserts. The sediments left behind by partial floods and those that form the alluvial deposits at the mouths of rivers can give a small idea of it.

6. While the horizontal is the normal and most generalized position of aqueous formations, one often sees in mountainous countries rather large expanses of hard rock established on an inclined and sometimes even vertical position, although their characteristics indicate that they were formed by water. Now, according to the laws of the equilibrium of liquids and of gravity, aqueous deposits cannot be formed except on horizontal planes, and considering the fact that those that occur on inclined planes are drawn downward by currents and their own weight, it is obvious that such

deposits must have been lifted up by some kind of force after their solidification or transformation into rock.

From these considerations one can conclude with certainty that all the rocky layers resulting from aqueous deposits in a perfectly horizontal position were formed over centuries by still water, and that every time they are in an inclined position it is because the ground was shaken and dislocated afterward by generalized or partial upheavals of varying degrees.

7. A characteristic fact of the highest importance because of the irrefutable evidence it supplies consists in the *fossil* remains of animals and plants that are found in huge quantities in the various strata. And since these remains are found in even the hardest rock, one must conclude that the existence of these beings was prior to the formation of such rock. Now, if one considers the prodigious number of centuries that were needed to harden them and bring them to the state they have been in since time immemorial, one must perforce conclude that the appearance of organic beings upon the earth is lost in the night of time, and that, consequently, it was well before the date implied in the book of Genesis.[4]

8. Among these plant and animal remains there are those that have been penetrated throughout, without altering their form, by silicate or calcareous matter that transformed them into stone, of which some are as hard as marble; these are petrifications per se. Others were simply encased in this matter while in a state of softness; these are found intact – sometimes entirely – in the hardest stone. Others, finally, left only their impression, though delicate and perfectly clear. Footprints have even been discovered in some rock, and by the shape of the foot, toes and nails, one can recognize the species of animal they came from.

9. Understandably, animal fossils are comprised of only solid and enduring parts, that is, bones, scales and horns. Sometimes they are complete skeletons; however, most frequently they are scattered parts, whose origin nevertheless is easy to recognize. By examining a jawbone or tooth, one can thereby tell if it belonged to an herbivore or a carnivore. Since all the parts of the animal have a necessary correlation, the shape of the head, a shoulder-blade, a leg bone or a foot bone are sufficient to determine its size, overall shape and lifestyle.[5] Land animals have an organization that does not allow them to be confused with aquatic animals. Fossilized fish and mollusk shells are extremely numerous; mollusk shells alone sometimes form entire banks of great thickness. By their nature one may easily determine if they were saltwater or freshwater animals.

10. Rounded stones, which in some places become mighty rocks, are an indisputable indication of their origin. They are rounded like boulders along the seashore, a sure sign of the attrition they endured by the effects of water. Areas where they are found to be buried in considerable masses were obviously occupied by the ocean or by either long-standing or violently agitated waters.

11. The terrains of the diverse formations are furthermore characterized by the very nature of the fossils they contain. The oldest ones contain plant or animal species that have completely disappeared from the surface of the globe. Some more recent species have also disappeared, but similar ones remain that differ from their ancestors only in size and a few nuances of shape. And finally, there are others, of which we see the last representatives, which will obviously tend to disappear in the not-too-distant future, such as the elephants, rhinoceroses and hippopotami, etc. Hence, as the stratifications approach our era, the animal and plant species also approach those that exist today.

The upheavals and cataclysms that have occurred on the earth since its origin have altered the conditions for its ability to sustain life and have caused entire generations of living beings to disappear.

12. By investigating the nature of the geological strata, one can positively determine if at the time of their formation the region that contains them was occupied by ocean or lakes, or by forests or plains populated by land animals. Consequently, if in a certain region one discovers a series of superposed strata containing marine, freshwater and land fossils, alternately and repeatedly, it is irrefutable proof that the region was often invaded by the sea, covered with lakes and turned into dry land.

And how many centuries upon centuries – thousands of centuries, perhaps – must have been required for the completion of each period! What a powerful force was needed to dislocate and then replace the ocean, and to lift the mountains! How many physical revolutions and violent upheavals the earth had to have to gone through before becoming as we have seen it since historic times! And some would want this to be the work of less time than it takes to make a plant grow!

13. As stated earlier, the study of the geological strata attests to successive formations that changed the appearance of the globe, and it divides its history into several eras. These eras constitute what are called *geological periods*, and knowledge of them is essential for understanding Genesis. There are six main periods, designated by the names primary, transition, secondary, tertiary, diluvial, and post-diluvial or present period. The terrains formed during the time of each period are also called primitive, transition, secondary, etc. Thus it is said that this stratum or rock, or such and such fossil are to be found in terrain of such and such period.

14. It is essential to note that the number of these periods is not absolute, but depends on the classification system. The six periods designated above comprise only those that were marked by a notable and widespread modification in the state of the globe. However, observation has proven that much successive stratification occurred during each period. That is why they have been divided into sub-periods characterized by the nature of the terrains, and which raise to twenty-six the number of well-characterized overall strata, not counting those that resulted from modifications due to purely local causes.

The primitive state of the globe

15. The flattening of the poles and other conclusive facts are sure indications that at its origin the earth must have been in a liquid or softened state. Such a state could have been caused by matter liquefied by fire or soaked by water.

It is proverbially stated: there is no smoke without a fire. This proposition, strictly true, is an application of the principle: there is no effect without a cause. For the same reason, it may be said: there is no fire without a source. Now, by the facts before us, it is not only smoke that is produced, but very real fire, which must have a source. This fire coming from within the earth and not from above it, the source must be within; the fire being permanent, the source must also be.

Heat, which increases as one goes deeper within the earth, and which at a certain distance from the surface reaches an extremely high temperature; the thermal sources that are hotter the deeper they originate; the fires and masses of molten and flaming matter that escape from volcanoes as if by huge blowers, or through fissures produced by earthquakes, can leave no doubt as to the existence of an inner fire.

16. Experience shows that the temperature rises 1 degree Celsius[6] for each 30 meters[7] of depth, from which it follows that at a depth of 300 meters[8], the increase is 10 degrees[9]; at 3,000 meters[10], 100 degrees[11] – the temperature at which water boils; at 30,000 meters[12] – approximately 7 to 8 leagues[13] – 1,000 degrees[14]. At 25 leagues[15] it is more than 3,300 degrees[16], the temperature at which no known matter can resist melting. From there down to the center there is a distance of more than 1,400 leagues[17] for a diameter of 2,800 leagues[18], which would be filled with molten matter.

Although only conjecture – judging the cause by its effect – this has all the characteristics of probability, and one may reach the conclusion that the earth is still an incandescent mass covered by a solid crust 25 leagues[19] thick or more, which is only 120th of its diameter. Proportionately, that would be much less than the thickness of the thinnest orange peel.

Moreover, the thickness of the earth’s crust is highly variable because there are places – especially in volcanic areas – where the heat and flexibility of the ground indicate that it is quite thin. The high temperature of thermal waters is also an indication of the proximity of the central fire.

17. Such being the case, it becomes obvious that the primitive state of fluidity or softness of the earth was caused by the action of heat and not of water. Thus, at its beginning the earth was an incandescent mass. As a result of the radiation of heat, it underwent what happens to all molten matter: little by little, it cooled off, and this cooling process naturally began at the surface, which hardened, while the interior remained liquefied. Hence, one may compare the earth to a lump of coal that comes out of the

furnace all red, and whose surface extinguishes and cools off upon contact with the air. However, if it is broken, the inside will still be ablaze.

18. At the time when the terrestrial globe was an incandescent mass, it did not contain a single atom more or less than it does today; under the influence of such a high temperature, the majority of the substances that compose it, and which we see in the form of liquids or solids, soils, rocks, metals and crystals, were in a much different state. They merely went through a transformation. As a result of cooling off and mixing, the elements formed new combinations. The air, considerably expanded, extended a huge distance; all the water, forcefully reduced to steam, was mixed in with the air. All the matter susceptible to volatilization, such as metals, sulfur and carbon, were in a gaseous state. The state of the atmosphere had no comparison with what it is today. The density of all these vapors gave it an opaqueness that not one ray of the sun could pass through. If any living being could have existed on the globe's surface at that time, it would have been illuminated only by the sinister glow of the furnace beneath its feet and the atmosphere ablaze, and it would have never even suspected the existence of the sun.

The primary period

19. The first effect of the cooling process was the solidification of the outer surface of the molten mass, which formed a solid crust that was thin at first but little by little became thicker. This crust was composed of extremely hard rock called *granite,* thus labeled because of its granulated appearance. One may distinguish three main substances in it: feldspar, quartz or rock crystal, and mica; this last has a metallic luster although it is not, in fact, a metal.

The granite layer was thus the first to form on the globe, which it encases completely and constitutes a sort of bony framework; it is the direct product of consolidated molten matter. It is upon this layer, and in the cavities that appeared on its tortured surface, where the successively deposited strata of other terrains formed afterward. What distinguishes the granite layer from the latter is the absence of any stratification; that is, it forms a compact and uniform mass throughout its thickness and it is not stratified. The effervescence of the incandescent matter must have produced numerous, deep fissures, through which this matter poured out.

20. The second effect of the cooling process was to liquefy some of the matter contained in the air in the state of vapor, and which then precipitated onto the surface of the soil. Consequently, there were showers and lakes of sulfur and bitumen, veritable streams of iron, copper, lead and other molten metals. This matter infiltrated into the fissures to create veins and lodes of metals.

Under the influence of these various agents, the granite surface underwent alternating decompositions; mixtures were produced that formed the

primitive ground per se, distinct from rock of granite, but in indistinct masses, and without regular stratification.
Next came the waters, which, falling upon the fiery ground, re-vaporized and re-fell in torrential rains, again and again, until the temperature finally allowed it to remain on the ground in a liquid state.
It was with the formation of the granite layer that the series of geological periods began, to which it would be proper to add that of the primitive, incandescent state of the globe.
21. Such was the aspect of that primary period, a veritable *chaos* of all elements mixed together and seeking their place, a period in which no living being could have possibly existed. Thus, one of its distinctive characteristics in geology is the absence of any trace of plant or animal life whatsoever.
It is impossible to assign a definite timeframe to that first period as well as the following ones. However, according to the time needed for a cannonball of a given size, heated to white-hot, and then cooled off to the point that a drop of water can remain on it in a liquid state, it has been calculated that if such a cannonball were the size of the earth, it would take more than a million years.

The transition period

22. At the beginning of the transition period, the solid granite crust was still very thin and offered only very weak resistance to the effervescence of the fiery matter that it covered and compressed. Thus, dilations were produced, numerous fissures through which the interior lava escaped. The ground displayed only slight irregularities.
Shallow waters covered nearly the entire surface of the globe, with the exception of elevated parts that formed frequently submersed lowlands.
The air was little by little purged of the heaviest matter that had been gasified temporarily, and which, upon condensing through the effect of the cooling process, precipitated onto the surface of the ground to be carried away and dissolved by the waters afterward.
When we speak of the cooling process at that time, one must understand the term in a relative sense, that is, in relation to the primitive state, because the temperature must still have been boiling hot.
The dense aqueous vapors that rose from this entire immense liquid surface fell back again in torrential, hot rain that obscured the air. Nevertheless, the rays of the sun began to appear through the misty atmosphere.
One of the last substances of which the air must have been purged – because it is naturally in the gaseous state – was carbonic acid, which at the time formed one of its constituent parts.
23. At this time the layers of sediment started to form upon the ground, deposited by waters loaded with silt and other diverse matter suitable for organic life.
Then, the first living beings of the plant and animal kingdoms appeared; small in number at first, one finds more and more vestiges of them as one

ascends the layers of this formation. It is worth noting that life manifests everywhere as soon as conditions are favorable, and that each species is born once the conditions proper for its existence are produced.

24. The first organic beings that appeared on the earth were plants of the least complex organization, designated in botany by the names cryptogams, dicotyledons and monocotyledons, that is, lichens, mushrooms, mosses, ferns and herbaceous plants. One does not yet see any trees with woody trunks except palm types, whose spongy stem is analogous to that of herbs[20].

The animals of this period, which came after the first plants, were exclusively marine types. At first, there were the polyparia, radiata and zoophytes: animals whose simple and, shall I say, rudimentary organization closely approximated that of plants. Later came the crustaceans and fish whose species no longer exist nowadays.

25. Under the influence of heat and humidity, and as a consequence of the excessive carbonic acid – a gas unsuitable for terrestrial animals to breathe but necessary for plants – disseminated in the air, the exposed grounds quickly became covered with lush vegetation, while at the same time aquatic plants multiplied in the swamps. Plants of this kind, which today are simple herbs of a few centimeters, reached prodigious heights and diameters. Thus, there were forests of tree-like ferns 8 to 10 meters[21] high and of proportional diameter; lycopods (club moss) of the same size; horsetail 4 to 5 meters[22] tall, but which today are only 1 meter[23]; and an infinite number of species that no longer exist. Toward the end of the period, a few coniferous or pine-type trees began to appear.

26. As a result of the displacement of the waters, the grounds that produced such masses of vegetation were submerged over and over, and were covered again and again with sediments, while those that dried out were in turn decorated with similar vegetation. Hence, many generations of plants were alternately destroyed and renewed. The same did not occur with the animals, which, since they were all aquatic, could not undergo such alternations.

The plant remains accumulated over a long series of centuries to form extremely thick layers. Under the action of heat, humidity and the pressure exerted by later soil deposits, and undoubtedly due to various chemical agents, gases, acids and salts produced by a combination of primitive elements, this plant matter underwent a fermentation that converted it into *coal.* Coal mines are therefore the direct product of the decomposition of heaps of plants accumulated during the transition period, which is why coal may be found on nearly every continent.[24]

27. The fossil remains of the lush vegetation of that era, found today under the ice of the polar lands as well as in the tropics, lead to the necessary conclusion that since the vegetation was uniform, the temperature also must have been. The poles, therefore, were not covered with ice as they are now. Back then, the earth drew its heat from itself, from the central fire that

warmed equally the entire solid, quite thin layer. This heat was much greater than what the solar rays were able to furnish, weak as they still were due to the density of the atmosphere. Only later, when the central heat could exert only a weak or no action at all upon the outer surface of the globe, did the heat from the sun become preponderant, and the polar regions, which received only oblique rays providing very little heat, became covered with ice. We know that, at the time of which we speak – and even for a long time thereafter – ice was unknown on the earth.
That period must have been very long, judging by the number and thickness of the coal layers.[25]

The secondary period

28. With the end of the transition period, the colossal vegetation and the animals that characterized that era disappeared, either because the atmospheric conditions were no longer the same or because a series of cataclysms wiped out everything that lived on the earth. It is probable that both causes contributed to this change, because, on one hand, a study of the terrains that signaled the end of that period attest to great convulsions caused by upthrusts and eruptions that spread huge quantities of lava over the ground, and because, on the other hand, notable changes occurred in the three kingdoms of nature.
29. From the mineral aspect, the secondary period is characterized by numerous and solid strata that attest to a slow formation in the midst of the waters and signal different well-characterized eras.
The vegetation spreads less quickly and is less colossal than in the preceding period, undoubtedly as a result of the decrease in heat and humidity, along with the supervening modifications in the elements comprising the atmosphere. The herbaceous and bulbous plants are joined by those with woody trunks and the first trees per se.
30. The animals are still aquatic, or are amphibious at best; animal life on dry land makes little progress. A prodigious quantity of shell animals develops in the seas as a result of the formation of calcareous matter; new fish species of a more perfected organization than in the prior period appear. The first cetaceans arrive. The animals most characteristic of this period are the gigantic reptiles, among which may be noted:
Ichthyosaurus – a species of fish-lizard that reached a length of nearly 10 meters, and whose prodigiously elongated jaws were armed with 180 teeth. Its overall shape looked a little like that of a crocodile, but without the scaly skin; its eyes were the size of a human head; it had fins like a whale, and like a whale, it expelled air through a blow-hole.
Plesiosaurus – another marine reptile as large as the ichthyosaurus. Its extremely long neck was bent like that of a swan and gave it the appearance of a huge snake fixed to the body of a turtle. It had the head of a lizard and the teeth of a crocodile. Its skin must have been smooth like the

ichthyosaurus', because no sign of scales or a carapace has yet been discovered.[26]
Teleosaurus – this one looked more like today's crocodiles, which seem to be miniatures of it. Like crocodiles, it had a scaly hide and lived both in water and on land. It was around 10 meters[27] long, of which 3 or 4[28]composed the head. Its enormous mouth could open up to 2 meters[29].
Megalosaurus – a large lizard, a species of crocodile 14 to 15 meters[30] in length, essentially carnivorous, that fed on reptiles, small crocodiles and turtles. Its formidable jaws were armed with teeth in the shape of a double-edged billhook blade curved backward in such a way that once they sunk into prey, it was impossible for it to get loose.
Iguanodon – The largest lizard that has ever appeared on the earth. It measured 20 to 25 meters[31] from its head to the tip of its tail. Its snout was topped by a bony horn similar to that of today's iguana, which the animal seemed no different from except in size (the modern-day iguana is only about 1 meter[32] in length). The shape of its teeth shows that it was herbivorous and that of its feet that it was a land animal.
Pterodactyl – a bizarre animal the size of a swan possessing a reptile-like body, a bird-like head and bat-like fleshy membranes that connected its toes. These membranes were quite long and acted like a parachute when it jumped on its prey from the top of a tree or from a rock. It did not have a horny beak like birds, but its jawbones, as long as half its body, were adorned with teeth and ended in a point-like beak.
31. During this period, which must have been very long – as attested to by the number and strength of the geological strata – animal life developed abundantly in the waters, as had occurred with vegetation in the previous period. The air, purer and more suitable for breathing, began to allow a few animals to live on land. The oceans were displaced several times, but without violent upheavals. With this period, those species of gigantic aquatic animals disappeared in their turn to be replaced later by analogous ones of less disproportionate shapes and smaller sizes.
32. Pride has caused humans to say that all the animals were created for their purposes and needs. However, what is the number of those that serve them directly, those they can subjugate, compared to the incalculable number of those with which they have never had and never will have any relationship? How can such a theory be sustained in the presence of such innumerable species which populated the earth by themselves for thousands and thousands of centuries, and which finally disappeared before humankind even arrived? Could one say that they were created for humankind's benefit? Nevertheless, those species had their reason for being, their usefulness. God could not have created them on a whim only to take pleasure in wiping them out later, for all of them had life, instincts, and feelings of pain and well-being. For what purpose did God create them? That purpose must have been supremely wise, even though we do not yet

comprehend it. Maybe one day it will be given to humans to understand it in order to confound their pride. Meanwhile, waiting, how much their ideas have broadened in light of the new horizons into which they are now permitted to plunge their sight, in the presence of the imposing spectacle of creation, so majestic in its slowness, so admirable in its foresight, so punctual, so precise and so invariable in its results!

The tertiary period

33. With the tertiary period, a new order of things begins for the earth. The state of its surface changes completely in appearance. The conditions for supporting life are modified profoundly and are close to the state they are in today. The first stages of this period are highlighted by a halt in plant and animal production; everything reveals the traces of an almost general destruction of living beings, and then subsequent new species appear whose more perfect organization is adapted to the nature of the environment in which they have been called to live.

34. During the preceding periods, due to its thinness the globe's solid crust displayed, as stated above, very weak resistance to the action of the interior fire. This envelope tore easily to allow molten matter to spread freely across the surface of the ground. This was no longer the case when it acquired a certain thickness. The fiery matter, compressed in every part like boiling water in a sealed container, ended up producing a sort of explosion. The granite mass split violently at a multitude of points and was crisscrossed with fissures like a *cracked vase*. Along the *course of these crevasses* the rising-then-sinking solid crust formed peaks, mountain chains and their offshoots. Some of the untorn parts of the envelope were merely raised, whereas at other points, depressions and excavations were produced.

The surface of the ground thus became very uneven; the waters, which until then had almost uniformly covered a great part of its area, were driven to the lowest places, leaving in the dry parts vast continents or isolated mountain peaks that formed islands.

Such was the great phenomenon that was completed in the tertiary period, and which transformed the appearance of the globe. It was produced neither instantaneously nor simultaneously at all points, but successively and at various times remote from one another.

35. One of the first consequences of this upheaval, as stated earlier, was the inclination of the primitive, horizontal sediment layers, which remained in this last position wherever the ground was not altered. Thus, it is on the sides and in the vicinity of mountains that these inclinations are most pronounced.

36. In order to reach the first formation in the regions where the sedimentary layers retained their horizontalness, it is necessary to traverse all the others, frequently to a considerable depth, at the end of which one eventually finds the granite rock. However, when these layers were raised into mountains, they were raised higher than their normal level – and

sometimes to great heights – in such a way that if one were to make a vertical cut in the mountainside, they would be exposed to view in all their thickness and would be superposed like the layers of the foundation of a building.

This is why at great heights one can find huge mollusk shell beds that had originally formed in the depths of the seas. It is perfectly known nowadays that there was no era during which the level of the sea could have reached such a height, because all the waters that existed on the earth would not have been sufficient, even if they had been a hundred times more voluminous. Hence, one would have to assume that the amount of water decreased, but then one would have to ask what happened to the portion that disappeared. The upthrusts, which are today an incontestable fact, explain both logically and unbendingly the marine deposits that may be found on certain mountains.[33]

37. In the places where the upthrust of the primitive rock caused a complete break in the ground, whether by its speed or by the shape, size, height and volume of the upraised mass, the granite was exposed bare *like a tooth that has broken through the gums*. Uplifted, broken and set back in order, the layers that had covered it were uncovered. That is why lands belonging to the oldest formations, and which may be found in their original position to a great depth, comprise the ground of certain regions today.

38. The granite mass, dislocated by the effect of the upthrusts, left fissures in some places through which the interior fire escaped, and through which molten matter flowed out: these are volcanoes. Volcanoes are like chimneys of this huge furnace, or better still, *safety valves*, which, providing an exit for excess igneous matter, preserve the globe from otherwise terrible disturbances. Consequently, it may be stated that the number of active volcanoes is a cause of security for the whole of the ground’s surface.

One can get an idea of the intensity of such fire by thinking about how many volcanoes have opened up in the middle of the ocean, and about the fact that the mass of water that covers and enters them is not enough to extinguish them.

39. The upthrusts operating on the solid mass necessarily displaced the waters, which retreated to the hollow areas and became deeper due to the rising of emerging terrains and the sinking of others. However, these same low places, thrust up in their turn here and there, fended off the waters, which then flowed elsewhere, and so on and so forth until they could settle in a more stable position.

The successive dislocations of this liquid mass inevitably carved and altered the surface of the ground. As the waters flowed off, they drew with them part of the land of the earlier formations uncovered by the upthrusts, denuded some of the mountains that had been covered by them and exposed their granite or calcareous base. Deep valleys were hollowed out, while others were filled up.

Hence, there are mountains formed directly by the action of the central fire: these are principally the mountains of granite. Others are the result of the action of the waters, which, carrying along moveable earth and soluble matter, carved valleys around a resistant base, calcareous or otherwise.
The matter carried by the water currents formed the layers of the tertiary period, which are easily distinguished from those of the preceding periods, not so much by their composition, which is much the same, but by their placement.
The strata of the primary, transition, and secondary periods formed upon a surface that was disturbed very little, and are therefore almost uniform throughout the earth. Those of the tertiary period, on the other hand, formed over a highly uneven base, and due to the carrying action of the waters, have a more local character. Everywhere, however, by excavating to a certain depth one can find all the previous layers in the order of their formation, while one cannot find everywhere the terrain of the tertiary period, nor all of its layers.
40. During the ground upheavals taking place at the beginning of this period, one perceives that organic life must have experienced a standstill, recognizable by examining the terrains lacking fossils. However, once a calmer state ensued, plants and animals reappeared. With the conditions for life changing and the atmosphere becoming more purified, one sees new species being formed bearing a more perfect organization. Regarding their structure, plants differ little from those of our day.
41. During the two preceding periods, the grounds not covered with water were not very extensive and were still marshy and frequently flooded; that is why there were only aquatic animals or amphibians. The tertiary period, which saw the formation of vast continents, is characterized by the appearance of land animals.
Just as the transition period saw the appearance of colossal vegetation and the secondary period gigantic reptiles, the tertiary period saw the appearance of giant mammals such as *the elephant, rhinoceros, hippopotamus, paleotherium, megatherium, dinotherium, mastodon, mammoth, etc.* These last two varieties of elephant were 5 to 6 meters[34] in height and their tusks reached up to 4 meters[35] in length. This period also saw the arrival of birds as well as a majority of the animal species in existence today. Some species of this era survived the subsequent cataclysms; others, generically classified as *antediluvial animals*, disappeared completely, or were replaced by similar species that were less heavy and massive, and whose first types were like prototypes. Such were the *felis spelaea*, a carnivore the size of a bull, with the anatomical characteristics of a tiger and lion, and the *cervus megaceros*, a variety of elk, whose antlers, 3 meters[36] in length, were spaced 3 to 4 meters[37] from tip to tip.

The diluvial period

42. This period is marked by one of the greatest cataclysms that have ever shaken the globe, changing once more the aspect of its appearance and destroying forever a huge number of living species, of which only remains have been found. Everywhere, it left traces that attest to how widespread it was. The waters were violently torn from their resting places to invade the continents, taking earth and rock with them, denuding mountains and uprooting centuries-old forests. The new deposits they formed are designated in geology as *diluvial terrains.*

43. One of the most significant signs of this great disaster are rocks called *erratic blocks*: the name given to granite boulders that are found isolated on the plains, resting on top of tertiary terrains and in the middle of diluvial terrains, sometimes several hundred leagues from the mountains from which they were torn. It is obvious that they could not have been carried such great distances except by violent currents.[38]

44. Another no less characteristic fact, and whose cause has not yet been explained, is that it is in the diluvial terrains that the first *aerolites* are found; since it is only in this epoch that they began to fall, the cause that produced them must not have existed previously.

45. It is also around this period that the poles began to be covered with ice and that the glaciers in the mountains were formed, which points to a noticeable change in the earth's temperature. This change must have been sudden, because if it had been gradual, animals such as elephants, which today live only in hot climates, but which are found in such great numbers in the fossilized state in the polar lands, would have had time to gradually move to more temperate regions. On the contrary, everything proves that they must have been caught suddenly by a great cold spell and encased in the glaciers.[39]

46. This was, then, a veritable universal deluge. Opinions are divided as to the causes that might have produced it, but whatever they may have been, the fact remains no less real.

It is generally thought that an abrupt change occurred in the position of the earth's axis and poles resulting in a surge of the waters over the globe's surface. If the change had occurred slowly, the waters would have been displaced gradually without shock, whereas everything points to a violent and sudden upheaval. Ignorant as we are of the true cause, one can state only hypotheses.

The sudden displacement of the waters could also have been caused by the upthrust of certain parts of the solid crust and the formation of new mountains in the bosom of the oceans, as happened at the beginning of the tertiary period; however, besides the fact that the cataclysm would not have been universal, this would not explain the sudden change in the temperature at the poles.

47. In the chaos caused by the upheaval of the waters, many animals perished. Others, in order to escape the inundation, retreated to high ground, caves and crevasses where they perished en masse either from

hunger, from devouring one another, or perhaps from the eruption of the waters in the places where they had sought refuge, and from which they could not escape. This would explain the large quantity of diverse animal bones – carnivores and others – that are found mixed together in certain caves, named for this reason *breccia* or *bone caves*. They are most often found under stalagmites. In some, the bones seem to have been carried there by water currents.[40]

The post-diluvial or present period - The birth of humankind

48. Once equilibrium was reestablished on the surface of the globe, plant and animal life quickly resumed its course. The ground had hardened to assume a more stable position; the air had become more purified and was more suitable for more delicate organs. The sun, which shined with all its light through a clean atmosphere, spread a less suffocating and more vivifying heat than that of the internal furnace. The earth became populated with less-ferocious and more-social animals. The more-succulent plants offered less coarse nourishment. In other words, everything was prepared on the earth for the new guest that would inhabit it. And it was then that *human beings* appeared, the last beings of creation, whose intelligence should from then on contribute to the overall progress as well as to their own.

49. Have human beings really existed on the earth only since the diluvial period, or had they appeared before? This is a very controversial question nowadays, but its solution – whatever it may be – would not change anything about the set of established facts, and the appearance of human beings would be no less than thousands of years prior to the date assigned by the biblical Genesis.

What led to the thinking that the appearance of humans occurred only after the deluge is that no authentic vestige of their existence in the prior period has ever been found. The bones that were discovered in various places, and which led to the belief in the existence of a supposed race of gigantic antediluvians, were recognized as being elephant bones.

What cannot be doubted is that humans did not exist in the primary, transition, or secondary periods, not only because no trace of them has ever been discovered, but because life-supporting conditions did not yet exist for them. If they appeared during the tertiary period, it could have been only toward the end and they would not have yet multiplied very much.

Furthermore, the diluvial period was short; consequently, it did not bring notable changes in atmospheric conditions. Plants and animals were nearly the same before and afterward; it is therefore not impossible that the appearance of humans preceded the great cataclysm. The presence of monkeys at that time is an established fact today and recent discoveries seem to confirm that of humans as well.[41]

Whatever the case may be as to whether or not human beings appeared before the great universal flood, it is certain that their humanitarian role actually did not really begin to take shape except in the post-diluvial period; one might therefore consider this period as characterized by their presence.

[1] Terrane or Terrain: A distinctive geologic formation or group of rocks or the area in which such features occur. (Webster's, 1991, op. cit.). – Tr.

[2] A friable earthy deposit consisting of clay and calcium carbonate... (ibid). – Tr.

[3] A broad area of open land, often high but poorly drained, with patches of heath and peat bogs. (The American Heritage College Dictionary, 1979). – Tr.

[4] Fossil, from the Latin fossilia, fossilis, derived from fossa, fosse, and the verb fodere, to dig, to excavate the earth. In geology, this word refers to the bodies or remains of organic bodies coming from beings that lived before historical times. By extension, it also refers to the mineral substances with traces of the presence of organisms, such as those that are imprinted by plants or animals. The word petrification refers only to bodies that have been transformed into stone by the infiltration of silicate or calcareous matter into their organic tissues. All petrifications are necessarily fossils, but not all fossils are petrifications. Objects that are covered by a stony layer, once they are immersed in certain waters loaded with calcareous substances, such as those of the Saint-Allyre creek near Clermont in Auvergne, are not petrifications per se, but simply incrustations. Monuments, inscriptions and objects crafted by humans belong to the field of archeology. – Auth.

[5] George Cuvier has taken paleontology to the point where only a single bone is often enough to determine the genus, species, shape and habits of an animal, and to reconstruct it entirely. – Auth.

[6] 2.12F.

[7] 98 ft.

[8] 984 ft.

[9] 21.2F.

[10] 9,842 ft.

[11] 212.0F.

[12] 98,425 ft.

[13] 21-24 mi. (calculations have been done on a basis of 1league = 3 miles).

[14] 2,120.0F.

[15] 75 mi.

[16] 6,996.0F.

[17] 4,200 mi.

[18] 8,400 mi.

[19] 75 mi.

[20] Herb: a flowering plant whose stem above ground does not become woody and persistent (Webster's, 1991, op. cit.) – Tr.

[21] 25 to 30 ft.

[22] 12 to 15 ft.

[23] 3 ft.

[24] Peat was formed in the same way by the decomposition of plant accumulations in marshes, but with the difference that, being much more recent and undoubtedly under different conditions, it did not have time to carbonize – Auth.

[25] Under the Bay of Fundy (Nova Scotia), Mr. Lyell found, under a coal layer 400 meters [1,200 feet] thick, 68 different levels, displaying evident traces of many soils from forests, wherein the tree trunks still had their roots. (L. Figuier) Supposing that it took 1,000 years to form each of these levels, it would have taken 68,000 years for this single coal layer to have formed – Auth.

[26] The first fossil of this animal was discovered in 1823 in England. Fossils were also later found in France and Germany. – Auth.

[27] 30 ft.

[28] 9 to 12 ft.

[29] 6 ft.

[30] 42 to 45 ft.

[31] 60 to 75 ft.

[32] 3 ft.

[33] Layers of calcareous mollusk shells have been discovered in the Andes in South America at a height of 5,000 meters [15,500 feet] above sea level. – Auth.
[34] 15 to 18 ft.
[35] 12 ft.
[36] 9 ft.
[37] 9 to 12 ft.
[38] One of these blocks, whose composition shows that it came from the mountains of Norway, serves as the pedestal for the statue of Peter the Great in St. Petersburg. – Auth.
[39] In 1771 the Russian naturalist Pallas discovered the entire body of a mammoth covered with its hide and part of its flesh in the middle of the ice of the North. In 1799 another one, described by the naturalist Adams, was discovered also encased in a huge block of ice at the mouth of the Lena River in Siberia. The Jakoutes of the area cut its flesh into pieces to feed their dogs. The hide was covered with black hair and the neck was laurelled with a thick mane. Without the tusks, which measured more than 3 meters [9 feet], the head weighed more than 400 pounds. Its skeleton is in the St. Petersburg museum. On the islands and beaches of the glacial sea, there is such a large quantity of tusks that they have become the object of a considerable trade, under the name of fossilized or Siberian ivory. – Auth.
[40] A large number of such caverns are known, of which some extend for a considerable distance. In Mexico there is one that extends for many leagues. The one at Adelsberg in Carniola (Austria) is no less than 3 leagues [9 miles]. One of the most famous is at Gailenreuth in Wurttemberg. There are also many in France, England, Germany, Sicily, and other European countries. – Auth.
[41] See: L'Homme antédiluvian by Boucher de Perthes and Des outils de pierre by the same; also, Discours sur les révolutions du globe by Georges Cuvier, with comments by Dr. Hoefer. – Auth.

CHAPTER VIII

Theories about the earth

The projection theory • The condensation theory • The incrustation theory • The soul of the earth

The projection theory

1. Of all the theories referring to the earth's origin, the one that has received the most credit of late is that of *Buffon*[1] either because of this author's position in the academic world or because not much more was known at the time in which he lived.

Observing that all the planets were moving in the same direction – west to east – and on the same plane, traveling orbits whose inclination did not exceed seven and a half degrees, Buffon concluded from this uniformity that they must have been set in motion by the same cause.

Since the sun is a molten incandescent mass, Buffon believed that a comet had struck it obliquely, scraping its surface and tearing away a portion, which, projected into space by the violence of the collision, spit into many fragments. These fragments formed the planets, which continued to move in a circle due to a combination of centripetal and centrifugal forces and in the direction given to them by the initial collision, i.e., on an ecliptic plane.

The planets would thus be parts of the incandescent substance of the sun and would therefore also have been incandescent at their origin. They began to cool off and consolidate in an amount of time proportional to their volume, and when the temperature permitted, life appeared on the surface.

As a result of the gradual lessening of the central heat, the earth at a given time would reach a state of complete cooling; the liquid mass would solidify entirely, and the air, condensing more and more, would finally disappear. The decreasing temperature would render life impossible and would bring about the decrease and subsequent disappearance of all organic beings. The cooling, which began at the poles, would reach all the continents all the way to the equator.

Such is, according to Buffon, the current state of the moon, which, being smaller than the earth, would now be an extinct world where life henceforth is excluded. The sun itself would one day suffer the same fate. According to his calculations, the earth would have taken approximately 74,000 years to reach its current temperature, and in 93,000 years it would see the end of organized nature.

2. Buffon's theory was disproved by new scientific discoveries, and has now been almost completely abandoned for the following reasons:

1) For a long time, it was believed that comets were solid objects, whose encounter with a planet could lead to the latter's destruction. According to this hypothesis, Buffon's supposition would not be improbable. But today we know that comets are composed of a condensed gaseous matter, rarified enough, however, that it is possible to see medium-sized stars through their cores. In this state, offering less resistance than the sun, a violent collision

capable of projecting a portion of its mass to such distances would be impossible.
2) The sun's incandescent nature is also a hypothesis that nothing till now has confirmed, but which, to the contrary, observations seem to refute. Although there is no certainty yet as to its nature, powerful means of observation currently available have enabled us to study it more thoroughly. It is now generally believed by science that the sun is a globe composed of solid matter surrounded by a luminous or photospheric atmosphere that is not in contact with its surface.[2]
3) In Buffon's time, only the six planets acknowledged by the ancients were known: Mercury, Venus, Earth, Mars, Jupiter and Saturn. Afterward, many more were discovered, of which three – Juno, Ceres and Pallas – have inclined orbits of 13, 10 and 34 degrees, respectively, which does not agree with the hypothesis of a unique projection movement.
4) Buffon's calculations regarding the cooling have been recognized as being completely inaccurate ever since the discovery of the law of decreasing heat by Fourier. The earth did not require 74,000 years to reach its current temperature, but millions of years.
5) Buffon considered only the globe's central heat, without taking the sun's rays into account. Today, highly precise scientific data based on experimentation has shown that, due to the thickness of the earth's crust, the internal heat of the globe has for a long time played only an insignificant part in the exterior surface's temperature. The variations that this atmosphere undergoes are periodic and are due to the preponderant action of the solar heat (see chap. VII, no. 25). The effect of this cause being permanent, while that of the central heat is nil or almost nil, the diminution of the latter cannot bring about noticeable modifications on the earth's surface. In order for the earth to become uninhabitable due to overall cooling, the sun would have to be extinguished.[3]

The condensation theory

3. The theory of the formation of the earth due to the condensation of cosmic matter is the prevailing one in science nowadays because it is the one that is best supported by observation, that best resolves the greatest number of problems, and which is based, more than all the others, on the great principle of universal unity. It was described previously in chapter VI under the heading *General Uranography.*
As we can see, these first two theories arrive at the same result: the primitive, incandescent state of the globe, the formation of a solid crust through cooling, the existence of a central fire and the appearance of organic life as soon as the temperature renders it possible. They differ, however, at essential points and it is quite possible that if Buffon were alive today, he would have formed other ideas.
Geology takes the earth at the point where direct observation is possible. Its state prior to that is outside the realm of experimentation and can be

nothing but conjectural; thus, between two hypotheses, common sense says that one must choose the one which is sanctioned by logic and which better agrees with observed facts.

The incrustation theory

4. We will mention this theory only to make note of it because there is nothing scientific about it; nonetheless, it has caused certain repercussions lately and has seduced a few people. It is summarized in the following letter:

“According to the Bible, God created the world in six days, four thousand years before the Christian era. This is contested by geologists through their study of fossils and the thousands of incontestable characteristics of ancientness that date the origin of the earth back to millions of years. However, the Scriptures speak the truth and geologists do too, and it was a simple peasant[4] who brought them into agreement by teaching us that our earth is an extremely modern encrusted planet composed of extremely ancient matter.

“Either after the destruction of an *unknown planet* that had reached maturity, or in harmony with one that used to exist in the place we occupy today, the soul of the earth received orders to bring its satellites together in order to form our current globe according to the rules of progress in everything and for everything. Only four of these heavenly bodies consented to the association proposed to them. Only the moon persisted in its autonomy, for *globes also possess free will*. To proceed with this melding, the earth’s soul directed an attracting, magnetic ray toward the satellites, which put into a cataleptic state all their plant, animal and human life appurtenances that would be brought into the community. This operation had as its witnesses only the earth’s soul and the great celestial messengers that aided it in the great task of opening up the globes to share their innards in common. Once the melding was done, the waters flowed into the empty places left by the moon’s absence. The atmospheres mixed together and the awakening – or resurrection – of the *prototypes that had been in the cataleptic state* began. Human beings were the last to be drawn out of their hypnotic state and they found themselves surrounded by luxurious vegetation and the animals that dwelt in peace about them in the terrestrial paradise. All this was accomplished in six days by the very powerful workers that God had put in charge of the deed. The planet *Asia* brought us the yellow race – the planet that had been civilized the longest; *Africa*, the black race; *Europe*, the white race; and *America*, the red race. The moon would have perhaps brought us the green or the blue race.

“Thus, certain animals, whose remains are all that are left of them, never lived on our current earth, but would have been brought from other worlds scattered by old age. The fossils that are found in climates where such life could not have lived down here undoubtedly lived in much different zones

on the globes where they originated. Such remains are found at our poles, whereas the animals used to live on the equator of their former worlds."

5. This theory has the most positive data of experimental science against it; moreover, it ignores the whole issue of the origin it claims to resolve. It states how the earth might have been formed, but it does not state how the four worlds that came together to structure it were formed.

If things had happened this way, why is it that nowhere can traces be found of the enormous melding that must have extended to the entrails of the globe? Each one of those worlds – Asia, Africa, Europe and America – upon bringing their own matter would have had a particularly different geology, *which is not the case*. On the contrary, we see first of all that the granite nucleus is uniform, of a homogenous composition in all parts of the globe and *without break in continuity*. Second, the geological strata of the same formation, identical in composition and superposed everywhere in the same order, continue without interruption from one side of the oceans to the other, from Europe to Asia, from Africa to the Americas, reciprocally. These layers, which testify to the transformations of the globe, verify that such transformations occurred all over the surface and not only on one part. They display the periods of the appearance, existence and disappearance of the same plant and animal species equally in different parts of the world. They show the flora and fauna of those remote periods progressing simultaneously everywhere under the influence of a uniform temperature, changing their characteristics everywhere as the temperature changed. Such a state of things is irreconcilable with the formation of the earth by the joining of several different worlds.

Furthermore, we must ask what would have become of the ocean that occupied the space left by the moon, since it was unwilling to join with its sisters. What would happen to the present earth if someday the moon got the idea to reclaim its place and thus expel the ocean?

6. This theory has seduced a few people because it seems to explain the presence on the earth of the different human races[5] and their localization. However, since these races could originate on those separate worlds, why could they not have done so at several points of the same globe? It wants to resolve one problem with an even bigger one. Actually, whatever had been the speed and *artfulness* of the *process*, such a joining together would not have been possible without violent upheavals. The faster it was the more disastrous the cataclysms would have been. Hence, it seems impossible that *beings that were simply put to sleep through a magnetic process* could have withstood them to awaken peacefully afterward. If they were mere prototypes, what were they composed of? How could beings that were completely formed have been reduced to the state of prototypes? Moreover, the question remains as to how these prototypes developed all over again. This would again be the earth forming in a miraculous way, but by a process less poetic and less grandiose than the one in the biblical Genesis, whereas

natural laws, deduced from observation, give a much more complete and rational explanation for its formation.[6]

The soul of the earth

7. The soul of the earth plays a principal role in the incrustation theory. Let us see if this idea has a better foundation.

Organic development is always related to the development of the intellectual principle. The organism completes itself to the degree that its soul's faculties multiply. In all beings, the organic scale always follows the progression of the intelligence, from the polyp to the human being. It could be no other way, since the soul requires an instrument that is appropriate for the importance of the functions it must perform. What good would it do the oyster to have the intelligence of an ape without the organs needed for manifesting it? Thus, if the earth were an animate being serving as the body of a special soul, by reason of its constitution this soul should be even more *rudimentary* than that of the polyp, since the earth does not even have the vitality of a plant. However, by the role attributed to this soul, one would make it a being gifted with reason and with the most complete free will, in short, a high order spirit, which is not rational, since never would a spirit have been so badly divided up and more imprisoned. Understood in such a sense, the idea of an earth soul must therefore be ranked among theoretical and chimerical concepts.

By *soul of the earth*, one might more rationally understand the idea of a collectivity of spirits in charge of developing and guiding its constitutive elements, which already supposes a certain degree of intellectual development; or better yet, the spirit to whom the lofty guidance of the moral destinies and progress of its inhabitants has been entrusted, a mission that could only be attributed to a being eminently superior in wisdom and knowledge. In this case, this spirit is not, properly speaking, the soul of the earth, since it is neither incarnated within it nor subordinated to its material state. It is a leader in charge of its direction, like a general is in charge of conducting an army.

A spirit charged with a mission as important as governing a world could not be capricious; otherwise, God would be very improvident to entrust the execution of God's laws to beings capable of transgressing them through their ill will. Now then, according to the incrustation doctrine, it would have been the ill will of the soul of the moon that would have caused the earth to remain incomplete. There are ideas that are self-refuting (see *Revue Spirite*, Sept. 1868, p. 261).

[1] Georges Louis Leclerc, Comte de Buffon, 1707-88, French naturalist. (Webster's, 1991, op. cit.). – Tr.

[2] A complete dissertation at the level of modern science [in the late 1800s] concerning the nature of the sun and comets may be found in Studies and Lectures on Astronomy by Camille Flammarion – Auth.

[3] For greater details on the subject and regarding the law of decreasing heat, see: Lettres sur les révolutions du globe by Dr. Bertrand, a former student of the Polytechnic Institute, Letter II. This work,

on the level of modern science, written with simplicity and without any sectarian spirit, offers a geological study of great interest – Auth.
[4]Michel, de Figagnères (Var), author of La Clef de la vie. – Auth.
[5] See “Explanatory Note,” p. 545 – Tr.
[6] When such a theory is connected to an entire cosmogony, one would have to ask upon what rational base the rest could lie. The notion that by means of this theory we can establish agreement between the biblical Genesis and science is entirely illusory, since science itself contradicts it. The author of the above letter – a learned man - while seduced for a moment by this theory, soon saw its vulnerable sides and did not delay in combating it with the support of science. – Auth.

CHAPTER IX

The transformations of the globe

General or partial transformations • The age of the mountains • The biblical flood • Periodic transformations • Future cataclysms • The increase or decrease in the earth’s size

General or partial transformations

1. The geological periods point out the phases of the general appearance of the globe resulting from its transformations. However, except for the diluvial period, which was characterized by a sudden upheaval, all the others occurred slowly and without a brusque transition. Throughout the time the globe’s constituent elements took to settle into their final positions, changes must have been of a general order. Once the base consolidated, only partial modifications occurred on the surface.

2. Besides the general upheaval, the earth experienced a large number of local disturbances that changed the appearance of certain regions. As with all the other disturbances, two causes contributed to them: fire and water.

Fire: whether by the volcanic eruptions that buried surrounding terrains under thick layers of ash and lava, engulfing villages and their inhabitants; whether by earthquakes or by upthrusts of the solid crust, driving the waters back to the lowest areas; or whether by the sinking of the crust in certain places to a greater or lesser extent, into which the waters flowed leaving other lands uncovered. This is what caused islands to emerge in the middle of the ocean, while others disappeared, how portions of continents separated to form islands, and how dried up arms of the ocean joined islands to continents.

Water: whether by the invasion or retreat of the oceans in certain coastal areas; whether by collapses, which, holding back the course of the waters, formed lakes; whether by overflowing and inundation; or whether by deposits that formed at the mouths of rivers. In drawing back the ocean, these deposits formed new regions: such is the origin of the Nile delta in Lower Egypt, and the Rhone or Camargue delta.

The age of the mountains

3. By examining the terrains torn up by the upthrust of the mountains and the layers that formed the foothills, it is possible to determine their geological age. By geological age of the mountains one ought not to understand it to mean the number of years of their existence, but rather the period during which they were formed, and, therefore, their relative ancientness. It would be erroneous to believe that this ancientness corresponds to their height or to their exclusively granitic nature, since the granite mass, upon being thrust up, could have perforated and separated the superposed layers.

Thus, it has been established by observation that the mountains of Vosges in Brittany, and Côte-d’Or in France – none of which are very high – belong to

the oldest formations. These date from the transition period and formed prior to the coal deposits. The Juras formed during the middle of the secondary period and were contemporaneous with the giant reptiles. The Pyrenees formed much later, toward the beginning of the tertiary period. Mont Blanc and the western Alps came after the Pyrenees and date from the middle of the tertiary period. The eastern Alps, which include the mountains of Tyrol, are even more recent because they formed only toward the end of the tertiary period. Some of the mountains in Asia are posterior to the diluvial period or are contemporaneous with it.

These upheavals must have caused huge localized disturbances and more or less considerable floods due to the displacement of the waters and the interruption and change of river courses.[1]

The biblical flood

4. The biblical flood, also designated by the name “great Asiatic flood,” was an event whose occurrence cannot be contested. It must have been caused by the upthrust of a part of the mountains in that region similar to what happened in Mexico. What has arisen in support of this opinion is the existence of an inland sea, which once extended from the Black Sea to the Arctic Ocean, and which has been confirmed by geological investigations. The Azov and Caspian Seas, whose waters are salty, although they are not connected to any other sea, and the Aral Sea, along with countless lakes scattered over the immense plains of Tartary and the Russian Steppes, seem to be what remain of this ancient sea. At the time of the thrusting up of the Caucasus Mountains after the universal flood, a portion of these waters retreated north toward the Artic Ocean, while the other flowed south toward the Indian Ocean. These inundations flooded and ravaged Mesopotamia and the entire region inhabited by the ancestors of the Hebrew people. Although this flood extended over quite a large area, it is acknowledged today that it was only local; that it could not have been caused by rain, no matter how heavy and continuous it might have been for forty days, since calculations have proven that the quantity of water that fell could not have been sufficient to cover *all the earth* up to the tops of the highest mountains.

Consequently, since the flood invaded all the lands known to them, the people at the time, who knew only about a very small fraction of the globe’s surface, and who had no idea of its configuration, must have thought that it affected the whole earth. If to this belief we add the imaginative and hyperbolic descriptive form peculiar to the oriental style, the exaggeration of the biblical narrative comes as no surprise.

5. The Asiatic flood is obviously posterior to the appearance of humans on the earth, since the memory of it has been preserved in the traditions of all that part of the world’s peoples, who have consecrated it in their theogonies.[2] [3]

The Asiatic flood is also posterior to the great universal flood, which marked the beginning of the present geological period; when we speak of antediluvian humans and animals, it is to be understood as referring to that first cataclysm.

Periodic transformations

6. Besides its annual movement around the sun, which produces the seasons, and its 24-hour rotational movement, which produces day and night, the earth has a third movement, which it completes in approximately 25,000 years (more precisely, 25,868), and which produces the phenomenon designated in astronomy by the name *Precession of the Equinoxes* (see chap. V, no. 11).

This movement, which would be impossible to explain in only a few words, without figures and a geometric demonstration, consists in a sort of circular oscillation, which has been compared to that of the spin of a toy top slowing down, by which the earth's axis, changing in inclination, describes a double cone whose tip is at the earth's center and whose bases take up the surface circumscribed by the polar circles, that is, an area of a 23 ½ degree radius.

7. The equinox is the moment in which the sun, in passing from one hemisphere to the other, is perpendicular to the equator. This happens twice per year: around March 21st, when the sun returns to the northern hemisphere, and around September 22, when it returns to the southern.

However, as a result of the gradual change in the axis' slant, which causes another in the slant of the equator on the ecliptic, the moment of the equinox advances a few minutes (25 minutes, 7 seconds) each year. This advance is what is called the *precession of the equinoxes* (from the Latin *procedere*, to move forward, combined from *proe*, forward, and *cedere*, to go).

Over time, these few minutes add up to hours, days, months and years, with the result that the spring equinox, which now arrives in March, will, at a given time, arrive in February, then in January, then in December. Then, December will have the temperature of March, March that of June, and so forth, until arriving back at March; at this point things will once again be in their current state, which will take place in 25,868 years, to recommence the same revolution indefinitely.[4]

8. The result of this conical movement of the axis is that the earth's poles do not constantly look at the same points in the sky; that the North Star will not always be the North Star; and that the poles will gradually incline varying degrees toward the sun and will receive varying degrees of direct rays from it. Thus, it follows that Iceland and Lapland, for example, which are below the Artic Circle, could at a given time receive solar rays as if they were on the latitude of Spain and Italy, and that, in the extreme opposite position, Spain and Italy could have the temperature of Iceland and Lapland, and so on and so forth with each renewal of the 25,000-year period.[5]

9. The consequences of this movement have not yet been determined precisely, because it has been possible to observe only a small part of its revolution. Therefore, regarding this subject there have been only presumptions, some of which have a certain probability.
Such consequences are:
1) The alternating heating and cooling of the poles and, consequently, the melting of the polar icecaps during half of the 25,000-year period, and their formation again during the other half, with the result that the poles would not be doomed to perpetual barrenness, but would in turn enjoy the benefits of fertility.
2) The gradual dislocation of the ocean, slowly invading the lands while uncovering others, to abandon them again and reenter its former sea floor. This periodic movement, renewed again and again, would constitute a true 25,000-year universal tide.
The slowness at which this movement of the ocean occurs makes it almost imperceptible to each generation, but it becomes discernable at the end of several centuries. It cannot cause any kind of sudden cataclysm, because humans retreat generation after generation as the ocean advances, and they advance into lands from which the ocean has withdrawn. It is more than probable that some scholars attribute to this cause the ocean's withdrawal from certain coasts and its invasion of others.
10. The slow, gradual and periodic dislocation of the ocean is a fact proven by experience and attested to by numerous examples on all points of the globe. Its consequence is the upkeep of the productive capacity of the earth. This long immersion is a time of repose, during which submersed lands recoup the vital principles that have been exhausted by a no less lengthy time of production. The huge deposits of organic matter, formed by the stay of the waters for centuries and centuries, are natural fertilizers that are renewed periodically, and generations go by without perceiving such changes.[6]

Future cataclysms

11. The great upheavals on the earth occurred at the time in which its solid crust, due to its thinness, offered only weak resistance to the effervescence of the fiery matter in its interior. One can see that such disturbances diminished in intensity and generality as the crust consolidated. Numerous volcanoes are now extinct, while others were covered over by terrains that formed afterward.
Of course, localized disturbances might still be caused as a result of volcanic eruptions, the emergence of new volcanoes and the sudden flooding of certain regions. A few islands might emerge from the ocean and others might sink, but the time of widespread cataclysms such as those that signaled the great geological periods has passed. The earth has taken a position, which, although not completely unchanging, has, from now on,

placed the human species under protection from generalized disturbances – with the exception of causes alien to our globe, which nothing could predict.
2. As for comets, today we are fully assured of their more beneficial rather than damaging influence, since they seem destined to revitalize the worlds, if we may put it like that, by taking to them the vital principles they have acquired during their travels through space and in the neighborhood of suns. They would thus be sources of prosperity rather than messengers of misfortune.
Due to their fluidic nature, currently well-proven, (see chap. VI, nos. 28 ff.), a violent collision is not to be feared, because if one of them has a close encounter with the earth, the earth would pass through the comet as if through a fog.
Their tail is even less to be feared; it is nothing but the reflection of solar light on the immense atmosphere that surrounds them, as it is constantly turned away from the sun and changes direction according to the position of this heavenly body. Due to the speed of its travel, this gaseous matter might well form a type of mane similar to the wake behind a ship, or the smoke of a locomotive. Furthermore, many comets have already come close to earth without causing any damage, and, due to their respective densities, the earth would actually exert a greater attraction over the comet than the comet over the earth. Only a vestige of old preconceptions could inspire fear over their presence.[7]
13. It is also necessary to relegate to the arena of absurd hypotheses the possible encounter of the earth with another planet. The regularity and invariability of the laws that preside over the movements of heavenly bodies remove all probabilities of such an encounter.
Nevertheless, the earth will have an end. How? This still remains in the realm of conjecture; however, since it is still far away from the perfection that it can reach and the old age that would signal its decline, its current inhabitants can rest assured that it will not happen during their lifetime. (See chap. VI, nos. 48 ff)
14. *Physically, the earth experienced the convulsions of childhood; it henceforth entered a period of relative stability: that of a calm progress, accomplished by the regular return of the same physical phenomena and the intelligent cooperation of humankind. However, it is still in the midst of the task of giving rise to moral progress. Therein shall lie the cause of its greatest disturbances. Until humankind has progressed sufficiently in perfection through intelligence and the practice of the divine laws, the greatest disturbances will be events caused by human beings more than by nature; that is, they will be moral and social rather than physical.*

The increase or decrease in the earth's size

15. Does earth's size increase, decrease or remain the same?
In support of the increase in the earth's size, some individuals base their position on the notion that plants are adding more to the soil than they are

taking from it, which in one sense is correct, but not in another. Plants nourish themselves as much, or even more, from the gaseous substances they draw from the atmosphere than from those they extract through their roots. The atmosphere makes up an integral part of the globe; the gases that constitute it come from the decomposition of solid bodies, which, upon recomposing, take back from the atmosphere what they released into it. This is an exchange, or rather, a perpetual transformation; the increase of plants and animals is carried out through the constitutive elements of the globe, and as such, their remains, as considerable as they may be, do not add one atom to the mass. If the solid part of the globe were to continuously increase due to such a cause, it would be at the expense of the atmosphere, which would decrease proportionally and would end up being unsuitable for life if it did not recover through the decomposition of solid bodies what it lost through their composition.

At earth's origin, the first geological strata were formed from solid matter momentarily volatilized by the effect of the high temperature, and which later, condensed by the cooling, fell as precipitation. Undoubtedly, they raised the surface of the ground a little, but without adding anything to the overall mass, since it was nothing but a displacement of matter. Once the atmosphere was purged of the foreign elements that had been in suspension to arrive at a normal state, things began to follow the regular course they took thereafter. Today, the least modification in the atmosphere's composition would lead to the destruction of the earth's current inhabitants, but new races would probably form under different conditions.

Considered from this point of view, the globe's mass, i.e., the sum of the molecules that comprise the whole of its solid, liquid and gaseous parts, has incontestably been the same since its origin. If it were to experience a dilation or condensation, its size would increase or decrease without its mass undergoing any change. However, if the earth did increase in mass, it would have to be the effect of some outside cause, since it could not draw from itself the elements needed for its own growth.

According to one theory, the globe will increase in mass and volume by the influx of interplanetary cosmic matter. There is nothing irrational about this idea, but it is too hypothetical to be accepted in principle. It is no more than one theory fought by opposing theories, none of which science has yet settled on. Regarding this subject, let us hear the opinion of the eminent spirit who dictated the scholarly *uranographic studies* described above in chapter VI:

"Worlds become exhausted as they age and tend to dissolve in order to serve as elements for the formation of other worlds. Little by little, they return to the universal cosmic fluid of space, which they themselves took in order to form. Furthermore, all bodies become spent due to attrition; the rapid and incessant movement of the globe through the cosmic fluid has the effect of continuously decreasing its mass, although of an indiscernible quantity over a given time.[8]

“As I see it, the existence of worlds is divided into three periods. First period: the condensation of matter, during which the globe’s size decreases considerably while its mass remains the same; this is the period of its infancy. Second period: the contraction and solidification of the crust; the eclosion of prototypes and the development of life up to the appearance of the most perfectible biotype. At this moment, the globe is in all its plenitude; it is the age of adulthood. It loses, though very little, its constitutive elements. As its inhabitants progress *spiritually*, it passes on to the period of *material* decrease. It suffers loss not only due to attrition, but also due to the disaggregation of its molecules – like a hard stone which, eroded by time, ends up falling into dust. In its dual movement of rotation and translation, it leaves fluidic bits of its substance in space until the moment in which its dissolution is complete.

“However, since its force of attraction is due to its mass – I am not referring to size – as the globe’s mass decreases, its conditions for equilibrium in space are modified. Overpowered by more massive planets against which it can no longer act as a counterweight, it suffers deflections in its movements, and as a result, there are profound changes in the conditions for life on its surface. Thus: birth, life and death; or infancy, adulthood, and decrepitude; these are the three phases through which every agglomeration of organic or inorganic matter passes. Only the spirit, which is not matter at all, is indestructible.” (Galileo, *Parisian Society*, 1868)

[1] “The last century [18th] offered a noteworthy example of a phenomenon of this type. In 1750, at a six-day hike from Mexico City, there was a fertile and well-cultivated area, where rice, corn and bananas were grown in abundance. During June, awful earthquakes constantly shook the ground for two whole months. On the night of September 28, the ground was shook by a violent convulsion; an area several miles across began to gradually rise and wound up reaching a height of 500 feet over an area of 10 square leagues [30 square miles]. The ground rolled like the waves of the ocean under the wind of a storm; thousands of mounds alternately rose and sank. Finally, a rift of nearly 3 leagues [9 miles] opened up; smoke, fire, red-hot rocks and ash shot up to a prodigious height. Six mountains rose up out of this enormous fissure, among which was the volcano given the name of Jorullo, which now rises 550 meters [app. 1,800 feet] above the ancient plain. At the time in which the ground began to shake, the Cuitimba and San Pedro Rivers flowed backward and flooded the entire plain that is now occupied by Jorullo; however, in the area that continued to rise, an abyss opened and swallowed them up. They reappeared to the west at a point far from their old banks.” (Louis Figuier, La Terre avant le déluge) – Auth.

[2] Theogony: An account of the origin of a god, goddess, or divine pantheon (Webster’s, 1991, op. cit.). – Tr.

[3] According to the Vedas, the Indian legend about the flood says that Brahma, transforming himself into a fish, approached the pious monarch Vaïvaswata and said to him: “The time for the ending of the universe has come. Soon, everything on earth shall be destroyed. You must build a ship, which you shall board after having loaded it with seeds of all the plants. You must await me in this ship and I will come to you, bearing on my head a horn that will enable you to recognize me.” The saint obeyed, built a ship, boarded it and attached it with a very strong cable to the horn of the fish. The ship was towed for many years at a great speed in the midst of the darkness of a dreadful storm, finally coming to rest on the top of Mount Himawat (in the Himalayas). Brahma then ordered Vaïvaswata to raise all living beings and to repopulate the earth. The similarity of this legend to the biblical narrative of Noah is striking. From India it passed on to Egypt, along with a multitude of other beliefs, and since the book of the Vedas predates that of Moses, the record of the former cannot be an imitation of the latter. It is therefore probable that the Mosaic writer, who had studied the doctrines of the Egyptian priests, drew his doctrine from theirs. – Auth.

[4] The precession of the equinoxes leads to another change, which operates on the position of the signs of the Zodiac. The earth revolves around the sun in one year, and as it advances, the sun each month faces a different constellation. There are twelve of these constellations: Aires, Taurus, Gemini, Cancer, Leo, Virgo, Libra, Scorpio, Sagittarius, Capricorn, Aquarius and Pisces. They are called Zodiac constellations or signs of the Zodiac, and they form a circle on earth's equatorial plane. According to the month in which an individual is born, it is said that he or she was born under such and such sign; hence, the prognostications of astrology. However, due to the precession of the equinoxes, it just so happens that the months no longer correspond to the same constellations. A person born in the month of July is no longer under the sign of Leo, but that of Cancer. Thus falls the superstitious notion connected to the influence of the signs (see chap. V, no. 12). – Auth.
[5] The gradual displacement of the isothermal lines, a phenomenon recognized by science as positively as the displacement of the ocean, is a material fact supporting this theory – Auth.
[6] Among the most recent occurrences proving the dislocation of the ocean, we may cite the following: when the ocean in the Gulf of Gascony [France] – between old Soulac and the tower of Cordouan – is calm, one can see segments of a wall on the bottom. These are the remains of the ancient and great city of Noviomagus, which was invaded by the waves in 580 A.D. The rock of Cordouan, which was then connected to the shore, is now 12 kilometers [7 miles] away. In the English Channel, on the coast of Le Havre, the ocean gains ground daily and is undermining the cliffs of Sainte-Adresse, which are crumbling little by little. Two kilometers [app. 1.5 miles] from the coast, between Sainte-Adresse and Cap de la Heve [Cape la Hague], the embankment of Eclat can be found, which in times gone by had been exposed and connected to dry land. Ancient documents state that upon that site, which is sailed over nowadays, there was a town called St. Denis-Chef-de-Caux. The sea invaded the land in the 14th century and the church was engulfed in 1378. It is stated that in good weather one can see its remains on the ocean bottom.
Along almost the entire length of Holland's coastline, the ocean is contained solely by the strength of dikes, which break from time to time. The ancient Lake Flevo, which rejoined the ocean in 1225, today forms the Gulf of Zuyder Zee. This invasion by the ocean engulfed a number of towns. According to these occurrences, the territory of Paris and of France will someday be once again occupied by the ocean, as it already has been many times, as proven by geological observations. The mountainous parts will form islands like today's Jersey, Guernsey and England, previously all contiguous to the continent. Then, it will be possible to sail over areas that today are traveled by railroads. Ships will reach Montmartre, Mont Valerien, and the hills of Saint-Cloud and Meudon. The woods and forests, through which we now stroll, will be buried under the waters, covered with silt and populated with fish instead of birds. The biblical flood could not have had the same cause, since in its case the invasion by the waters was sudden and of short duration; otherwise, that duration would have lasted for many thousands of years, and would still be the case today, without humans being aware of it. – Auth.
[7] The comet of 1861 passed through the earth's orbit at 20 hour's distance ahead of the planet, which became immersed in its atmosphere without any resultant accident. – Auth.
[8] In its orbit around the sun, the earth's velocity is about 400 leagues [1,200 miles (1,930 kilometers)] per minute. Since its circumference is 9,000 leagues [27,000 miles (44,000 kilometers)] then with each rotation on its axis, each point on the equator travels 9,000 leagues [27,000 miles] in 24 hours, or 6.3 leagues [19 miles (30.5 kilometers)] per minute – Auth.

CHAPTER X

The organic Genesis

The first formation of living beings • The vital principle • Spontaneous generation • The scale of organic beings • Human beings

The first formation of living beings

1. There was a time when there were no animals; thus, they had a beginning. Each species appeared to the degree that the globe acquired the conditions necessary for its existence – that is certain. How were the first biotypes of each species formed? We can understand that once the first couple appeared, individuals multiplied. But where did this first couple come from? This is one of those mysteries connected to the beginning of things and about which one can only make hypotheses. If science cannot yet completely resolve the problem, it can at least point the way.

2. One of the first questions that arise is the following: Did each animal species come from a *primary couple* or from many couples created, or, if you will, *germinated* simultaneously in different places?

This latter supposition is the most probable; we might even say that it results from observation. In fact, the study of the geological layers attests to the presence – in terrains of similar formation and across vast areas – of the same species on the farthest apart points of the globe. Such generalized and somewhat contemporaneous multiplication would have been impossible with one single primitive type.

Additionally, the life of one individual, especially an emerging individual, is subject to so many eventualities that an entire creation could have been compromised if not for the plurality of types, which would imply an unacceptable improvidence on the part of the Supreme Creator. Moreover, if a particular type could have been formed at one point, it could have been formed at many points by the same cause.

Hence, everything concurs in demonstrating that there was a simultaneous and multiple creation of the first couples for each animal and plant species.

3. The formation of the first living beings may be deduced by analogy from the same law according to which inorganic bodies were formed and continue to be formed each and every day. As one delves further into the laws of nature, one can see the mechanisms, which at first seem so complicated, become simplified and melded together in the great law of unity that presides over the whole work of creation. This will be better understood when one becomes aware of the formation of inorganic bodies, which was the first step.

4. Chemistry regards a certain number of substances as elementary, such as oxygen, hydrogen, nitrogen, carbon, chlorine, iodine, fluorine, sulfur, phosphorous and all the metals. Through their combination, they form

compounds: oxides, acids, alkalis, salts and the innumerable varieties that result from combinations of these.

The combination of two elements to form a third requires a particular concourse of circumstances, whether a particular degree of heat, dryness or humidity, whether movement or rest, whether an electric current, etc. Unless these conditions are present, the combination does not occur.

5. When a combination does occur, the elements lose their characteristic properties, whereas the resultant compound possesses new and different qualities from those of the originals. It is thus, for example, that oxygen and hydrogen, which are invisible gases, when combined chemically form water, which is liquid, solid or gaseous, depending on the temperature. Properly speaking, in water there is no longer either oxygen or hydrogen, but rather a new substance. If water is decomposed, the two gases return to their free state, recover their own properties and there is no longer water. The same quantity of water can thus be alternately decomposed and recomposed ad infinitum.

6. The composition and decomposition of substances occur as a result of the degree of affinity the basic elements have for one another. The formation of water, for example, results from the mutual affinity between oxygen and hydrogen. However, if water comes in contact with an element that has a greater affinity for oxygen than hydrogen has, the water decomposes: the oxygen is absorbed, the hydrogen is released and there is no longer water.

7. Compound substances are always formed in definite proportions, that is, by the combination of a certain quantity of constituent elements. Hence, in order to form water, one part oxygen and two parts hydrogen are required. If two parts oxygen are combined with two of hydrogen, then instead of water one gets hydrogen dioxide, a corrosive liquid, formed nonetheless from the same elements as water, but in a different proportion.

8. Such is, in a few words, the law that presides over the formation of all the substances in nature. The innumerable variety of these substances results from a small number of basic elements combined in different proportions.

Thus, oxygen combined in certain proportions with carbon, sulfur and phosphorous forms carbonic, sulfuric and phosphoric acid; oxygen and iron form iron oxide or rust; oxygen and lead – both harmless – form lead oxides such as litharge (lead monoxide), white lead and red lead oxide, which are poisonous. Oxygen combined with calcium, sodium or potassium forms lime, soda and potash. Lime combined with carbonic acid forms calcium carbonate or calcareous stone such as marble, chalk, sandstone, and stalactites in caves; combined with sulfuric acid it forms calcium sulfate or gypsum and alabaster; with phosphoric acid it forms calcium phosphate, the main component of bone. Chlorine and hydrogen form hydrochloric acid; chlorine and sodium form sodium chloride or sea salt.

9. All these combinations and thousands of others are obtained artificially in small quantities in chemistry labs; they form spontaneously on a large scale in the great laboratory of nature.

At its origin, the earth did not contain these compounds but only their volatized constituent elements. When the calcareous terrains and others, turned stony over time, were deposited on the earth's surface, those elements did not exist completely formed. However, they were contained in the air, in a gaseous state. Having precipitated due to the cooling effect, these elements combined under favorable conditions according to the degree of their molecular affinity. It was then that the different varieties of carbonates, sulfates, etc. were formed, at first dissolved in the waters and afterwards deposited on the surface of the ground.

Let us suppose that, for whatever reason, the earth returned to its primitive incandescent state and everything decomposed. The elements would separate, all fusible substances would melt, and all those that were volatile would volatilize. Later, a second cooling would bring about a new precipitation and the old combinations would form once again.

10. These considerations show how much chemistry is necessary for the understanding of Genesis. Before the knowledge of the law of molecular affinity, it was impossible to comprehend how the earth formed. Chemistry has clarified the question under a completely new light, just as astronomy and geology have from other points of view.

11. In the formation of solid bodies, one of the most remarkable phenomena is crystallization, which consists in the symmetrical form assumed by certain substances in passing from the liquid or gaseous state to the solid state. This form, which varies according to the nature of the substance, is usually that of geometric solids such as the prism, the rhomboid, the cube or the pyramid. Everyone is familiar with crystals of sugar, crystals of rock or crystallized silica, which are six-sided prisms that end up in an equally hexagonal pyramid. The diamond is pure carbon or crystallized carbon. The designs that are produced on window panes in winter are due to the crystallization of water vapor during freezing in the form of prismatic needles.

The regular arrangement of crystals has to do with the particular shape of the molecules of each body. These particles, infinitely small to us, but which nevertheless occupy a certain amount of space, seek one another out through molecular attraction and arrange and juxtapose themselves according to the requirement of their shape so as to take their place around the nucleus or initial center of attraction to form a symmetric whole.

Crystallization occurs only under certain favorable circumstances, apart from which it cannot take place. Temperature and motionlessness are essential conditions. One knows that high heat keeps the molecules apart and does not allow them to condense, and that agitation opposes their symmetric arrangement, yielding only a disorganized and irregular mass, differing from crystallization per se.

12. The law that presides over the formation of minerals leads naturally to the formation of organic bodies.

Chemical analysis shows us that all plant and animal substances are composed of the same elements as inorganic compounds. Of these elements, oxygen, hydrogen, nitrogen and carbon play a principal role, while others are found only accessorily. As in the mineral kingdom, the difference of proportion in the combination of these elements produces all the varieties of organic substances and their diverse properties such as muscle, bone, blood, bile, nerve tissue, brain matter and fat in animals; sap, wood, leaves, fruit, essences, oils and resins, etc. in plants. Thus, in the formation of animals and plants there is no special substance that may not be found also in the mineral kingdom.[1]

13. A few common examples will enable one to understand the transformations that occur in the organic kingdom solely through modification of the constitutive elements.

In grape juice there is not yet either wine or alcohol, but only water and sugar. When the juice matures and is placed under the right conditions, an inner process occurs to which we give the name of fermentation. In this process, a part of the sugar decomposes; the oxygen, hydrogen and carbon separate and combine in the proportions needed to produce alcohol. Thus, when we drink grape juice, we are not drinking alcohol because it does not yet exist. It is formed from the constituents of water and sugar, without having one more or one less molecule in all.

In the bread and vegetables we eat there is obviously no meat, blood, bone, bile or brain matter, and yet these same foods decompose and recompose by means of digestion to produce those different substances simply through the transmutation of their constitutive elements.

In the seed of a tree, there are no wood, leaves, blossoms or fruit, and it would be a childish error to believe that a microscopic form of the entire tree could be found in the seed. Moreover, there is not nearly enough oxygen, hydrogen and carbon in the seed to form even one tree leaf. The seed contains a prototype that germinates when the conditions are favorable, and this prototype thrives through the liquids it draws from the soil and the gases it breathes from the air. These liquids, which are not stem, leaves, blossoms or fruit, seep into the plant to form the sap, the same as food, in animals, forms the blood. This sap is taken by circulation to all parts of the plant, and depending on what part it arrives at and what special preparation it undergoes, becomes stem, leaves and fruit, just as the blood becomes flesh, bone, bile, etc. And yet, they are always the same elements: oxygen, hydrogen, nitrogen and carbon combined in various ways.

14. The different combinations of elements needed to form mineral, plant and animal substances cannot, therefore, occur except in a favorable environment and circumstances. Apart from such circumstances, the elementary principles are in a sort of inertia. However, as soon as the circumstances become favorable, a process of development begins; the

molecules start to move, to jiggle, to attract, approaching and separating in virtue of the law of affinity, and through their multiple combinations, they compose the infinite variety of substances. If such conditions cease, the process stops suddenly, only to start over when the appropriate conditions reappear. This is how plants become active, slow down, stop and start over under the action of heat, light, humidity, cold or dryness; that a certain plant prospers in one climate or soil, but weakens or dies in another.

15. What occurs daily under our very eyes can set us on the road to what happened at the beginning of time, for the laws of nature are invariable.

Since the constituent elements of both organic and inorganic beings are the same, and since we see them incessantly form rocks, plants and fruit, one can conclude that, like the first rocks, the bodies of the first living beings were formed by the aggregation of elementary molecules in virtue of the law of affinity to the degree that the conditions for life on the globe were favorable for this or that species.

The similarity in form and color in the reproduction of the biotypes of each species can be compared to the similarity in the form of each type of crystal. Juxtaposed under the influence of the same law, the molecules produce an analogous whole.

The vital principle

16. In stating that plants and animals are formed from the same basic constituents as minerals, one must understand it in an exclusively material sense; moreover, it is an issue that relates solely to the body.

Without speaking of the intelligent principle, which is a separate concept altogether, there is in organic matter a special, elusive principle, which has not yet been defined: *the vital principle*. This principle, *active* in the living being and *extinct* in the dead one, gives to substance the characteristic properties that distinguish it from inorganic substances. The chemical processes that decompose and recompose the greater part of inorganic bodies can decompose organic bodies as well, but have never succeeded at recomposing even one dead leaf, obvious proof that in organic bodies there is something that is non-existent in the others.

17. Is the vital principle something distinct with an existence of its own? Or rather, going back to the theory of a sole generative element, is the vital principle a particular state, one of the modifications of the universal cosmic fluid, which then becomes the life principle, just as it becomes light, fire, heat or electricity? It is in this last sense that the issue has been resolved through the communications quoted earlier in the book. (See chap. VI, *General Uranography*)

Whatever one’s opinion may be on the nature of the vital principle, however, it does exist, because we see its effects. One can therefore logically admit that as organic beings are formed they assimilate the vital principle that is necessary for their purpose; or if we prefer, that this principle develops in each individual by the same effect of the combination

of the elements, much like we see heat, light and electricity develop under the influence of certain circumstances.

18. If oxygen, hydrogen, nitrogen and carbon combine without the vital fluid, they form only a mineral or inorganic body; the vital principle modifies the molecular composition of that body to give it special properties. Instead of a mineral molecule one has an organic molecule.

The activity of the vital principle is maintained during life by the activity of the organs, just as heat is maintained by the rotating movement of a wheel. When this action ceases because of death, the vital principle *is extinguished* like the heat when the wheel stops turning. However, the *effect produced* on the molecular state of the body by the vital principle persists after the extinction of the principle, just as the carbonization of wood persists after the extinction of the heat. In the analysis of organic bodies, chemistry recovers the constituent elements: oxygen, hydrogen, nitrogen and carbon, but it cannot reconstruct these bodies because the cause no longer exists; hence, it cannot reproduce the *effect*, whereas it can reconstitute a stone.

19. We have taken for comparison the heat produced by the movement of a wheel because it is a commonplace effect, familiar to all and easy to understand. However, it would be more precise to say that, in the combination of elements to form organic bodies, *electricity* is produced. Organic bodies would thus be veritable *electric batteries*, which function as long as the components of these batteries can sustain the conditions required to produce electricity, that is, life; and which stop when such conditions cease, that is, death. According to this, the vital principle would be but a particular type of electricity called *animal electricity*, released during life by the activity of the organs, and whose production ceases upon death by the cessation of such action.

Spontaneous generation

20. One might of course ask why living beings no longer form under the same conditions in which the first ones appeared on the earth.

The question of spontaneous generation, with which science is still preoccupied today, although solved differently, cannot help but cast light on the subject. The proposed problem is this: are organic beings nowadays formed spontaneously by the sole union of constituent elements, without prototypes produced beforehand by ordinary methods of generation; in other words, without fathers or mothers?

The supporters of spontaneous generation respond in the affirmative and support themselves on direct observations that seem to be conclusive. Others think that all living beings are reproduced by one another and support themselves on the fact that experience has proven that when the prototypes of certain plant and animal species are scattered about, they can retain a latent vitality for a considerable amount of time, until circumstances are favorable for their eclosion. This opinion always leaves open the question of the formation of the first types of each species.

21. Without discussing the two theories, one should note that the principle of spontaneous generation can obviously apply only to beings of the lowest orders of the plant and animal kingdoms, to those in which the manifestation of life begins, whose extremely simple organism is somewhat rudimentary. In fact, these are the first beings that appeared on the earth, and whose generation had to have been spontaneous. We would therefore be witnessing an ongoing creation analogous to that which took place during the earliest ages of the world.

22. So then, why do we not see beings of a more complex organization form in the same way? Such beings have not always existed – this is a positive fact – so they must have had a beginning. If the moss, the lichen, the zoophyte, the infusoria[2], the intestinal worms and others can be produced spontaneously, why could not the same happen with trees, fish, dogs or horses?

Here, investigations have stopped for the time being. The guide wire has been lost and until it is found again, the field is open to hypotheses. It would thus be imprudent and premature to take mere theories as absolute truths.

23. If spontaneous generation is an established fact, as limited as it may be, it is no less a crucial one, a landmark pointing the way to new observations. If complex organic beings are not produced in this manner, who knows how they started? Who knows the secret of all transformations? When one sees an oak sprout from an acorn, who could say that some mysterious tie might not also exist between the polyp and the elephant? (See no. 25).

In the current state of our knowledge, we cannot present the theory of *ongoing* spontaneous generation except as a hypothesis, although a probable one, and which may someday take its place among recognized scientific truths.[3]

The scale of organic beings

24. There is no clearly marked out delimitation between the plant and animal kingdoms. Outside the confines of the two kingdoms are the *zoophytes* or *animal-plants*, whose name indicates that they have a little of each: it represents the link between both.

Like animals, plants are born, live, grow, draw nourishment, breathe, reproduce and die. Like animals, they need light, warmth and water to live; if they are deprived of these elements, they languish and die. The absorption of noxious air and deleterious substances poisons them. Their most distinctive characteristic is that they are bound to the soil and extract their nutrition from it without moving about.

The zoophyte has the outward appearance of a plant. Like the plant, it is attached to the soil; like the animal, life in it is more accentuated – it draws its nourishment from the ambient environment.

A step higher, the animal is free and goes in search of its nourishment. First, there are the innumerable varieties of polyps with gelatinous bodies, without well-defined organs, and which differ from plants only because of

their locomotion. Next in the order of development of organs, vital activity and instinct come the helminthes or intestinal worms; the mollusks, fleshy animals without bones, some of which are naked, such as the gastropods and octopi, whereas others bear shells, such as the snails and oysters; the crustaceans, whose skin is covered with a hard crust, such as the crab and lobster; the insects, in which life takes on a prodigious activity and in which an industrious instinct often manifests, such as in the ant, bee and spider. Some undergo a metamorphosis, such as the chrysalis that becomes an elegant butterfly. Then comes the order of the vertebrates – animals with bony skeletons – which includes the fish, reptiles, birds and finally the mammals, whose organization is the most complete.

25. If we consider only the two extreme ends of the chain, there is obviously no apparent analogy; but if one goes from one link to the next without breaking continuity, one goes from plants to vertebrates without a brusque transition. One understands therefore that animals of a complex organization could be but a transformation, or if one prefers, a gradual development, imperceptible at first, from the species immediately before, and so on, step by step, all the way down to the elementary primitive being. The difference between the acorn and the oak is enormous, yet if one follows step by step the development from the acorn, one will arrive at the oak and will marvel that it has come from such a small seed. Now, if the acorn contains the appropriate latent elements for the formation of a giant tree, why could it not be the same from the mite to the elephant? (See no. 23)

From this, we understand that there is spontaneous generation only for elementary organic beings; more complex species would be the product of successive transformations among these same beings as climatic conditions became suitable. As each species acquired the faculty to reproduce, cross-breeding led to innumerable varieties. And subsequently, once the species became established and sustainable, who is to say that the primitive prototype from which it came did not disappear as useless henceforth? Who is to say that our present-day mite is the same as the one that, mutation by mutation, has produced the elephant? Thus it could be explained why there is no spontaneous generation among complex animals. This theory, though not accepted as definitive, is the one that prevails in science today; it is regarded by serious observers as the most rational.

Human beings

26. From the corporeal and purely anatomical point of view, humans belong to the class of mammals, differing from them only by nuances in their outward appearance; furthermore, they are of the same chemical composition as all animals, and have the same organs, the same functions, and the same modes of nutrition, breathing, secretion and reproduction; they are born, live and die under the same conditions, and at death their body decomposes just as those of everything else that lives. In their blood,

flesh and bones there is not one atom different from those found in the body of animals; like them, upon dying, the oxygen, hydrogen, nitrogen and carbon that had combined to form them return to the earth, and through new combinations will form mineral, plant and animal bodies once more. The analogy is so close that one can study the organic functions of certain animals when experiments cannot be performed on actual human beings.

27. In the class of mammals, human beings belong to the *biped* order. Immediately below them are the *quadrupeds* (animals with four legs) or apes, some of which, such as the orangutan and the chimpanzee, display certain human-like behaviors, so much so that for a long time they were designated by the name *jungle men*; like humans, they walk upright, use a stick, construct their shelters and take food to their mouth with their hands – all human-like characteristics.

28. However little one might observe the scale of living beings from the point of view of their organisms, one realizes that, from the lichen to the tree, and then from the zoophyte to the human being, there is an unbroken gradual chain in which all the links have a point of contact with the preceding one; *in following the series of beings step by step, it may be said that each species is an improvement, a transformation of the one immediately beneath it*. Since the human body is under identical conditions as other bodies chemically and constitutionally, that it is born, lives, and dies in the same way, it must have been formed under the same conditions.

29. Whatever the impact on their pride, humans must resign themselves to seeing *in their physical bodies* nothing but the last link of animality *on the earth.* The inexorable argument of the facts is in plain sight, against which it is useless to protest.

However, the more the body decreases in value in their eyes, the more the spiritual principle increases in importance. If the former places them on the level of the animal, the latter raises them to an immeasurable height. We see the circle within which the animal is contained; we do not see the limit that can be reached by the human spirit.

30. Materialism can see in that fact that Spiritism, far from fearing the discoveries of science and its positivism, moves forward and encourages them because it is sure that the spiritual principle, *which has its own existence*, cannot suffer any damage.

Spiritism walks hand in hand with materialism on the terrain of matter; it accepts everything that materialism accepts; but at the point where materialism stops, Spiritism goes farther. Spiritism and materialism are like two travelers who journey together from the same starting point; having gone a certain distance, one says, “I cannot go any farther,” while the other continues on his way and discovers a new world. Why, then, would the former say that the latter is mad simply because, in seeing new horizons, he wants to go beyond the limits in which it is proper for the former to stop? Was not Christopher Columbus also regarded as crazy because he believed in a world beyond the ocean? How often has not history told of such sublime

madmen who enabled humankind to advance, and for whom we braid garlands after we pushed them into the mud?

Well then! Spiritism, that madness of the 19th century – according to those who wish to remain on the terrestrial shore – uncovers a whole world to us, a world much more important for humankind than the Americas because not everyone goes to the Americas, whereas all, without exception, go to the spirit world, making continuous journeys from one to the other.

Having come to this point within Genesis, materialism stops, whereas Spiritism carries on with its research in the realm of the *spiritual Genesis.*

[1] (Author's note) The following table of the analysis of a few substances shows the difference of properties that result from the difference in the proportion of the constituent elements. Considered in 100 parts:

	Carbon	Hydrogen	Oxygen	Nitrogen
Cane sugar	42.470	6.900	50.630	--
Grape sugar	36.710	6.780	56.510	--
Alcohol	51.980	13.700	34.320	--
Olive oil	77.210	13.360	9.430	--
Walnut oil	79.774	10.570	9.122	0.534
Fat	78.996	11.700	9.304	--
Fibrin	53.360	7.021	19.685	19.934

[2] One of the classes of Protozoa, including a large number of species, all of minute size. Formerly, the term was applied to any microbe found in infusions of decaying organic material, but the term is now applied more specifically to one of the classes of the phylum Ciliophora, of ciliated protozoa. (Webster's, 1913) – Tr.

[3] See Revue Spirite, July 1868, p. 201: "Développement de la théorie de la génération spontanée." – Auth.

CHAPTER XI

The spiritual Genesis

The spiritual principle • The union of the spiritual principle and matter • A hypothesis concerning the origin of human bodies • The incarnation of spirits • Reincarnation • Emigrations and immigrations of spirits • The Adamic race • The doctrine of fallen angels

The spiritual principle

1. The existence of the spiritual principle is a fact which, so to speak, has no more need of demonstration than the material principle. To some extent, it is an axiomatic truth: it is affirmed by its effects, just as matter is affirmed by its own effects.

According to the principle, “Since every effect has a cause, every intelligent effect must have an intelligent cause,” there is no one who cannot tell the difference between the mechanical movement of a bell rattled by the wind and the movement of this same bell meant as a signal or a warning, thereby attesting to a thought, an intent behind it. Now, since it would not occur to anyone to attribute the thought to the physical matter comprising the bell, one must conclude that it was moved by an intelligence that used it as an instrument to manifest itself.

For the same reason, it would not occur to anyone to attribute thought to the corpse of a dead person. If living persons think, it is because there is something within them that is no longer there when they are dead. The difference between living persons and the bell is that the intelligence that makes the latter move is outside of it, whereas the intelligence that causes the former to act is within them.

2. The spiritual principle is the corollary of the existence of God. Without this principle, God would have no reason to exist, since one could no more conceive of the supreme intelligence reigning solely over brute matter throughout eternity than an earthly monarch reigning solely over stones throughout his or her life. Since it is not possible to accept a God apart from one possessing the essential attributes of the Divinity, that is, justice and goodness, such attributes would be worthless if they were exerted solely on matter.

3. On the other hand, one could not conceive of a supremely just and good God creating intelligent and sensible beings in order to consign them to nothingness after a few days of uncompensated suffering, gazing upon that unending succession of beings who are born without having been asked to be, who think for an instant in order to know nothing but pain, and who then cease to exist forever after an ephemeral existence.

Without the survival after death of the thinking being, the suffering of life would be a purposeless cruelty on God’s part. That is why materialism and atheism are corollaries of each other: denying the cause, they cannot accept

the effect; denying the effect, they cannot accept the cause. Materialism therefore becomes plausible to itself, but it is not plausible to reason.

4. The idea of the perpetuity of the spiritual being is innate in human beings; it exists within them as an intuition, a yearning. They understand that the compensation for the miseries of life lies only in the perpetuity of the spiritual being, which is why there always have been and always will be more spiritualists than materialists, and more theists than atheists.

To the intuitive idea and the power of reasoning, Spiritism adds the sanction of the spirit phenomena, that is, the physical proof of the existence of the spiritual being, its survival after death, its immortality and its individuality. Spiritism renders precise and definite what used to be a vague and abstract idea. It shows us the intelligent being acting outside of matter, whether after or during the life of the body.

5. Are the spiritual principle and the vital principle one and the same thing?

Starting, as always, from the observation of the facts, we will state that, if the vital principle were inseparable from the intelligent principle, there would be good reason to confuse the two. However, because there are beings that live but do not think, such as plants, human bodies that are still animated with organic life while there is no manifestation of thought, vital movements that are produced in living beings independent of any act of their will, and organic life that during sleep is preserved in full activity while mental life does not manifest itself by any outward sign, we should conclude that there are grounds to believe that organic life per se resides in a principle inherent to matter, independent of the spiritual life that is inherent to the spirit. Since matter has a vitality independent of the spirit, and since the spirit has a vitality independent of matter, it is obvious that this two-fold vitality rests upon two different principles. (See chap. X, nos. 16-19)

6. Might the spiritual principle have its source in the universal cosmic element? Might it not be only a transformation, a mode of existence of that element, such as light, electricity, heat, etc.?

If that were the case, the spiritual principle would undergo the vicissitudes of matter and it would be extinguished through disaggregation just as the vital principle is. The intelligent being would have only a momentary existence like the body, and at death it would return to nothingness, or to the universal whole, which would amount to the same thing. In other words, this would be the sanction of materialist doctrines.

The *sui generis* properties that are recognized in the spiritual principle prove that it has its own independent existence, since if its origin were in matter, it would lack such properties. Since intelligence and thought cannot be attributes of matter, by going back from the effects to the cause, one reaches the conclusion that the material element and the spiritual element are the two constitutive principles of the universe. The individualized spiritual principle constitutes the beings called *spirits*, while the

individualized material element constitutes the different organic and inorganic bodies of nature.

7. Accepting the spiritual being and the fact that its source cannot be found in matter, then what is its origin, its point of departure?

Here, the means of investigation are completely lacking, just as for everything else connected with the origin of things. Humans can only verify what actually exists; concerning everything else, they can formulate only hypotheses; and whether the knowledge of human origins is beyond the reach of their present intelligence or whether it is useless or unsuitable for them to possess it at the moment, God has not given them such knowledge – not even through revelation.

What God does say to them through his messengers, and what humans can deduce otherwise by themselves from the principle of supreme justice – an essential attribute of the Divinity – is that all humans have the same point of departure; that they are all created simple and ignorant with an equal aptitude for progressing by means of their individual activity; that they will all reach the degree of perfection suitable to them through their own personal efforts; that being children of the same Father, they are all objects of the same consideration; and that none are more favored or more gifted than others, nor excused from the labor that will be imposed on everyone else to reach the goal.

8. Just as God has created material worlds throughout all eternity, God has also created spirit beings throughout all eternity; otherwise, material worlds would have no objective. It would be easier to conceive of spirit beings without material worlds than the latter without spirit beings. It is the material worlds that must furnish spirit beings with the elements of activity for the development of their intelligence.

9. Progress is the normal condition of spirit beings and relative perfection is the goal they must reach. Now, if God has created incessantly throughout all eternity, it follows that throughout all eternity there also have been beings that have reached the culminating point of the scale.

Before the earth came into being, worlds had succeeded worlds, and when the earth emerged from the chaos of the elements, space was already populated with spirit beings of every degree of advancement, from those who had just been born to life to those who, since time immemorial, had taken their place among the pure spirits – commonly called angels.

The union of the spiritual principle and matter

10. Before matter could be the object of labor of the spirit for the development of its faculties, it was necessary for the spirit to be able to act upon it, and this is why it came to dwell in it like a lumberjack dwells in the forest. Since matter had to be simultaneously the object and instrument of labor, God, instead of joining the spirit to rigid stone, created organized, flexible bodies capable of both receiving all the impulses of the spirit’s will and of lending itself to all its movements.

The body is therefore simultaneously the envelope and instrument of the spirit, and as the spirit acquires new aptitudes, it clothes itself in another envelope that is appropriate for the new type of work that it must perform, just as less heavy tools are employed by those capable of performing more delicate work.

11. To be more exact, it must be stated that it is the spirit itself that molds its own envelope and renders it adequate for its new requirements. The spirit perfects, develops and completes the organism to the degree that it feels the need to manifest new faculties; in other words, it tailors it to the stature of its intelligence. God furnishes the spirit with the materials, but it is up to the spirit to use them. That is why advanced races have an organism, or rather, a cerebral apparatus that is more perfected than that of primitive races.[1] This also explains the special style that the spirit's character imprints on the outline of the physiognomy and the appearance of the body. (See chap. VIII, no. 7: *The soul of the earth*)

12. Once a spirit is born to spiritual life, in order to advance it must make use of its faculties, which are rudimentary at first. For this reason, it clothes itself in a corporeal envelope that is adequate for its state of intellectual infancy, an envelope it leaves behind to put on another as its abilities increase. Now, since there have been worlds throughout all time, and since these worlds have given birth to organized bodies appropriate for receiving spirits, likewise throughout all time, spirits – whatever their degree of advancement – have found the elements required for their corporeal life.

13. Since the body is exclusively material, it undergoes the vicissitudes of matter. After functioning for some time, it becomes disorganized and decomposes. Since the vital principle no longer finds the element needed for its activity, it is extinguished and the body dies, and since the lifeless body has become useless henceforth, the spirit leaves it as one leaves a house that is in ruins or clothes that are worn-out.

14. The body therefore is nothing but an envelope meant for receiving the spirit; thus, its origin and the materials from which it is constructed are of little importance. Whether or not the human body is a special creation, it is nonetheless composed of the same elements as the body of animals; it is animated by the same vital principle – in other words, lit by the same fire and illuminated by the same light – and is subject to the same vicissitudes and the same needs: there is no contesting this point.

If we were to subtract the spirit and consider matter only, the human being would have nothing that distinguishes it from the animal. However, all that changes when a distinction is made between the *habitation* and the *inhabitant*.

A great lord, whether living under a thatched roof or dressed in the coarse woolen clothing of a peasant, is a great lord nonetheless. The same applies to the human being: it is not its garment of flesh that sets it above the animal and makes it a being apart; it is its spiritual being, its spirit.

A hypothesis concerning the origin of human bodies

15. Because of the similarity between the outward form of the human body and that of an ape, some physiologists have concluded that the former is only a transformation of the latter. There is nothing impossible in this, nor would the dignity of the human being suffer if such were the case. The bodies of apes could very well have served as garments for the first human spirits, who were necessarily little-advanced; for their incarnation on the earth, these garments were more appropriate for their needs and more adequate for the exercise of their faculties than the body of any other animal. Instead of a special garment having to be made for the spirit, it found one completely ready. It could therefore clothe itself in the skin of the ape without ceasing to be a human spirit, just as humans sometimes cover themselves in the skins of certain animals but remain human beings.[2]

It must be well understood that this is only a hypothesis, which is in no way intended as a principle. It is given only to show that the origin of the body does not prejudice the spirit, which is the principal being, and that the similarity between the human body and that of the ape does not imply parity between its spirit and that of the ape.

16. In accepting this hypothesis, one could say that, under the influence and by the effect of the intellectual activity of its new inhabitant, the envelope became modified and embellished in its details, while retaining the general form of the whole (see no. 11). In procreating, these improved bodies reproduced displaying the same changes, much as what occurs with grafted trees. They gave origin to a new species that gradually pulled away from the primitive type as the spirit progressed. The ape spirit did not disappear, but continued to procreate ape bodies for its use – just as the fruit of the wild plant reproduces wild plants – whereas the human spirit continued to procreate human bodies, variants of the first mold in which it was established. The strain bifurcated: it produced an offshoot and this offshoot became a strain.

Since there are no brusque transitions in nature, it is probable that the first humans that appeared on the earth must have differed little from the ape in outward appearance and, undoubtedly, also in intelligence. In our times, there are still primitives whose arm and foot length and head conformation bear so much similarity to that of an ape that with the addition of body hair the resemblance would be even closer.

The incarnation of spirits

17. Spiritism teaches us how the union of the spirit and the body occurs in incarnation.

Due to its spiritual essence, the spirit is an indefinite, abstract being that cannot act directly upon matter; it needs an intermediary. This intermediary is the fluidic envelope, which is, in a certain way, an integral part of the

spirit, a semi-material envelope, which one could say is linked to matter by its origin and to spirituality by its ethereal nature. Like all matter, it is drawn from the universal cosmic fluid, which, in this instance, undergoes a special modification. This envelope, designated by the name *perispirit,* makes the spirit – an abstract being – into a concrete, definite being that is perceptible to thought. It renders it capable of acting upon tangible matter as well as all imponderable fluids, which, as we know, are the most powerful driving forces.

The perispiritual fluid is therefore the link between the spirit and matter. During its union with the body, it is the vehicle of its thought for transmitting movement to the various parts of the organism, which act under the impulse of its will, and for enabling repercussion within the spirit of the sensations produced by exterior agents. The nerves are its conducting wires, in the same way that the metal wire is the conductor of the electric fluid in the telegraph.

18. When the spirit must incarnate in a human body that is about to be formed, a fluidic tie, which is nothing but an extension of its perispirit, connects it to the zygote, to which it is attracted by an irresistible force from the moment of conception. As the fetus develops, the tie tightens. Under the influence of the *fetus' vital material principle*, the perispirit, which possesses certain properties of matter, is united *molecule by molecule* to the body that is forming, a fact from which one may deduce that the spirit, through the intermediary of its perispirit, sort of *takes root* in the fetus, much as a plant takes root in the soil. When the fetus is fully developed, the union is complete and the being is born to external life.

By an opposite effect, this union between the perispirit and corporeal matter (a union that had been completed under the influence of the zygote's vital principle) terminates when this principle ceases to act due to the disorganization of the body. This union, which had been maintained only by an actuating force, breaks down as soon as this force ceases to act. Then, the perispirit disengages *molecule by molecule* – as when it was uniting – and the spirit is set free. Thus, *it is not the departure of the spirit that causes the death of the body; rather, the death of the body is what causes the departure of the spirit.*

From the moment of death, the integrity of the spirit is complete; its faculties acquire an even greater power of penetration, while the life principle is extinguished in the body. This is obvious proof that the vital principle and the spiritual principle are two distinct things.

19. By enabling us to observe the phenomena that accompany this separation, Spiritism teaches us that this separation is sometimes quick, easy, gentle and painless; at other times it is slow, laborious and horribly painful due to the moral state of the spirit, and it may take entire months.

20. One particular phenomenon, also pointed out through observation, always accompanies the incarnation of the spirit. Since the spirit is held by the fluidic tie that attaches it to the fetus, confusion seizes it; this confusion

increases as the tie strengthens, and during the last moments, the spirit loses all self-awareness so that it is never a conscious witness of its own birth. The moment the newborn breathes, the spirit begins to recover its faculties, which develop as the organs that are to serve for their manifestation form and consolidate.

21. However, at the same time that the spirit recovers its self-awareness, it loses the memory of its past, but without losing the faculties, qualities and aptitudes that it had acquired previously, aptitudes which had remained temporarily in a latent state, and which, upon resuming their activity, will help the spirit do more and do better than what it did in its previous incarnation. It picks up its previous work where it left off; it is for it a new departure point, a new step to climb. Here, the Creator's goodness is once again expressed, since the remembrance of an often painful or humiliating past, if added to the heartaches of its new existence, could trouble and hamper it. Instead, it remembers only what it has learned because it is useful. If it sometimes retains a vague intuition of past events, it is like the remembrance of a fleeting dream. Therefore, this is indeed a new person despite how old the spirit might be. It leans on new experiences aided by its earlier acquisitions. When it returns to the spirit life, its past unfolds before it and it can then determine whether it used its time well or badly.

22. Thus, there is no gap in the life of the spirit in spite of the forgetfulness of the past. The spirit is always *itself* before, during and after incarnation; incarnation is but one special phase of its existence. Such forgetfulness occurs only during the outward life of relationships, however. During sleep, while it is partially disengaged from its corporeal ties and restored to freedom and the spirit life, the spirit remembers; its spirit sight is not so obscured by matter.

23. Taking humankind at its lowest degree of the intellectual scale, such as the least evolved humans, one questions if that is the starting point for the human soul.

According to the opinion of certain spiritualist philosophers, the intelligent principle, distinct from the material principle, individualizes and develops by passing through the many degrees of animality. This is the time when the soul rehearses for life and develops its first skills through practice. One might say that this is its incubation period. Having arrived at the degree of development that the human state requires, it receives the special characteristics that comprise the human soul. Hence, there would be a spiritual filiation from animal to human being, just as there is a corporeal filiation.

Founded on the great law of unity that presides over creation, one must agree that this theory is in keeping with the justice and goodness of the Creator. It gives a reason, an objective and a destiny to animals, which are no longer disinherited beings, but which find in the future reserved for them a compensation for their sufferings. What constitutes the spiritual human being is not its origin, but the special attributes it is endowed with upon

entering humanity, attributes that transform it and make it into a distinct being, just as the tasty fruit is distinct from the bitter root that produced it. By having passed through the lineage of animality, the human being would not be any less human; it would not be any more an animal than the fruit is the root, just as a learned person is not the shapeless fetus through which he or she debuted in the world.

However, this theory leads to numerous issues, whose pros and cons are not amenable to discussion at the moment, nor would it be appropriate to examine the different theories that have been formulated on the matter. Hence, without searching for the soul's origin and the channels through which it might have passed, we shall take as *its entrance into humanity* the point at which, endowed with moral sense and free will, it begins to bear responsibility for its own actions.

24. The incarnate spirit's obligation to provide for the sustenance of its body, its safety and well-being constrains it to apply its faculties in the search to exercise and develop such faculties. Thus, its union with matter is useful for its evolution and that is why *incarnation is a necessity*. Furthermore, by means of the intelligent labor that it performs upon matter to its own advantage, it concurs in the physical transformation and progress of the globe that it inhabits. Its laboring for its own progress is how it contributes to the Creator's work as an unsuspecting agent.

25. The spirit's incarnation, however, is neither constant nor perpetual; it is only transitory. Upon leaving one body behind, it does not take another immediately. During a shorter or longer length of time, it lives the spirit life, which is its normal life. Hence, the amount of time spent during its different incarnations is very small compared with the time it spends in the state of a free spirit.

During the interval between its incarnations, the spirit also progresses in the sense that it uses for its advancement the knowledge and experience it acquired during its corporeal life. It examines what it did during its earthly stay, reviews what it learned, recognizes its wrongs, draws up its plans and makes resolutions by which it hopes to be guided in a new existence as it tries to do better. It is in this way that each life is a step forward on the path of progress, a sort of a practical schooling.

26. Incarnation is therefore not normally a punishment for the spirit, as some might think, but a condition inherent to the unevolved state of the spirit and a means of progressing. (See *Heaven and Hell*, chap. III, nos. 8 ff.)

As the spirit progresses morally, it dematerializes; that is, by freeing itself from the influence of matter, it purifies itself. Its life becomes more spiritualized and its abilities and perceptions broaden; its happiness is a result of the progress it has accomplished. However, since it acts in virtue of its free will, it can, through negligence or ill will, delay its advancement. Consequently, it prolongs the duration of its material incarnations, which then become a punishment, since due to its own fault it remains in the

lower ranks and must start the same task all over again. It thus depends on the spirit itself to shorten – through its own efforts at self-purification – the extent of the period of incarnations.

27. The physical progress of a planet accompanies the moral progress of its inhabitants. Now, since the creation of worlds and spirits is incessant, and since the latter progress quickly or slowly by virtue of their free will, it follows that there are both newer and older worlds at different degrees of physical and moral advancement; worlds where incarnation is more material or less so, and where, consequently, the labor for spirits is also harsher or less harsh. From this point of view, earth is one of the least advanced. Because it is populated with relatively low ordered spirits, corporeal life is harder than on other worlds, just as there are less-evolved worlds where life is even harder than on the earth, and for whom the earth would be a relatively happy world.

28. When, on one world, spirits have accomplished the amount of progress that the state of that world makes possible, they leave it in order to incarnate on another that is more advanced, where they acquire new knowledge; this process continues until incarnation in physical bodies is no longer useful, and they live the spirit life exclusively, where they progress in yet another sense and through other means. When they arrive at the culminating point of progress, they enjoy supreme bliss. Admitted into the counsels of the Almighty, they have God's thought and become God's messengers and direct ministers in the government of worlds, having under their orders other spirits at different degrees of advancement.

Hence, all spirits, incarnate or discarnate, at whatever degree they may find themselves in the spirit hierarchy, from the lowest to the highest, have their functions in the grand mechanism of the universe. All are useful to the whole while at the same time useful to themselves; the least advanced, as happens with unskilled underlings, are charged with material tasks, at first unconsciously and then gradually more aware. There is activity everywhere in the spirit world; nowhere is there useless idleness.

The collectivity of spirits is, in a way, the soul of the universe. It is the spiritual element that acts in everything and everywhere under the impulse of the divine thought. Without this element there is only inert matter, without purpose, without intelligence, and without any other driving power than the physical forces that leave a multitude of unsolvable problems. Through the action of the *individualized* spiritual element, everything has a purpose, a reason for being; everything is explained. This is why, without spirituality, one runs into insurmountable difficulties.

29. When the earth possessed the climactic conditions appropriate for the existence of the human species, human spirits began to incarnate on it. Where did they come from? Whether they were created at that moment, or whether they came completely formed from the earth, space or other worlds, their presence after a certain time is a fact, because before their arrival there were only animals. They clothed themselves in bodies that

were appropriate for their special needs and aptitudes, and which physiologically belonged to animality. Under their influence and by the exercising of their faculties, these bodies changed and improved – this is what results from observation. Thus, let us set aside the issue of origin as being unsolvable for the time being; let us consider the spirit, not at its point of departure, but at the point in which the first seeds of free will and moral sense start to manifest in it: we see it performing its human-related role, without troubling ourselves with the environment where it had spent the period of its infancy, or, if one prefers, its incubation. Despite the similarity of its envelope to that of the animals, by the intellectual and moral faculties that characterize it, we are able to distinguish the human spirit from the latter, just as beneath the same woolen garments we may distinguish the uncouth from the refined person.

30. Although the first humans to arrive must have been little-advanced, and for that very reason had to incarnate in highly imperfect bodies, they must have had among them perceivable differences in their characteristics and aptitudes. Kindred spirits naturally grouped together due to similarity and affinity. The earth was thus populated with diverse categories of spirits who varied in their desire either to progress or to rebel against progress. Their bodies received the imprint of their spirit's character, and procreating according to their respective types, the result was races that differed both physically and morally (see no. 11)[3] Similar spirits continued to incarnate, preferably amongst those who were similar to them, thereby perpetuating the distinctive physical and moral characteristics of the various races and their peoples. Such characteristics are lost only over long periods of time through interbreeding and the progress of the spirits. (See *Revue Spirite*, Jul. 1860, p. 198: Phrénologie et physiognomonie)

31. The spirits who came to populate the earth may be compared to those multitudes of immigrants of various origins who go to settle in a virgin land. There they find wood and stone to build their dwellings, and individuals give theirs their own different style, according to the degree of their own knowledge and particular flair. There, they form groups based on similarity of origin and taste, and these groups end up forming tribes and then whole nations with their own customs and character.

32. Therefore, progress has not been uniform throughout the human species. The more intelligent races naturally surpassed the others, aside from the fact that, upon coming to incarnate on the earth after the arrival of the first ones, spirits newly-born to the spirit life rendered the differences in progress more noticeable. In fact, it would be impossible to attribute the same antiquity of creation to the primitives barely distinguishable from the apes, to the Chinese, for example, and even less to civilized Europeans.

Nevertheless, the spirits of primitives also belong to humankind; someday they will reach the level of their elders, *but this certainly will not occur in bodies of the same physical race*, bodies unsuited to a certain degree of moral and intellectual development. When the instrument is no longer on

par with their development, they will emigrate from such surroundings to incarnate on a higher level, and so on and so forth until they have surmounted all earthly levels, at which point they will leave the earth behind to go on to other more and more advanced worlds.

Reincarnation

33. The principle of reincarnation is a necessary consequence of the law of progress. Without reincarnation, how can one explain the difference between the present societal state and that of the times of barbarism? If souls are created at the same time as the body, those being born today are as new and primitive as those who lived a thousand years ago. Adding the fact that there would be no connection or necessary relationship between the two groups and that they would be completely independent of each other, why then are souls today better endowed by God than those of their predecessors? Why do they possess greater understanding? Why do they possess finer instincts and gentler customs? Why do they have an intuition about certain matters without having learned them? This dilemma is a challenge to solve if we are led to believe that God creates souls of different qualities according to times and places, a proposition irreconcilable with the idea of supreme justice. (See chap. II, no. 19)

On the contrary, if we say that the souls of today have already lived in far-off times; that they could have been barbaric in barbaric times, but have since progressed; that for each new existence they bring with them what they acquired in previous lives; and that, consequently, the souls of civilized times are not souls created more perfect, but rather, souls that have been perfecting *themselves* over time, then you will have the only plausible explanation for the cause of social progress. (See *The Spirits' Book,* chaps. IV and V).

34. Some persons believe that the soul's various existences are accomplished by going from world to world, and not on one and the same globe, where each spirit would appear only once.

This doctrine would be acceptable if all earth's inhabitants were at the same intellectual and moral level. In that case, they could not progress except by going from one world to another, and their reincarnation on earth would be pointless. God, however, does nothing pointless. On earth we find all degrees of intelligence and morality, from primitivism bordering on animality to the most advanced civilization; hence it offers a vast field for progress. It would bear asking why primitives would be obligated to seek the next evolutionary level elsewhere when it and successive levels lie right next them where they now are; why advanced humans could take their first steps only on less evolved worlds when beings analogous to all such worlds are all around them; and why there are different degrees of advancement, not only from culture to culture, but within the same culture and the same family. If such were the case, God would have done something useless in placing ignorance and wisdom, barbarism and civilization, good and evil

side by side, when in reality it is precisely such contact that enables stragglers to progress.

There is therefore no more need for humans to change worlds at each step than there is for a student to change schools at each grade. Far from being an advantage for progress it would be a hindrance, because the spirit would be deprived of the example of seeing the higher degrees, and of the possibility of correcting its errors within the same environment and in the presence of those whom it had offended, a possibility that represents for it the most powerful means of moral progress. After a short cohabitation, spirits would disperse and become strangers to one another, and the bonds of family and friendship, without time to consolidate, would be broken.

Furthermore, to a moral unsuitability, a material unsuitability would be added. The nature of the elements, the organic laws and the conditions for life vary from world to world; in this regard, there are no two that are perfectly identical. Our treatises on physics, chemistry, anatomy, medicine, botany, etc. might be of no use on other worlds. Whatever is learned on other worlds is not lost, however; not only does it develop the intelligence, but it also helps to develop ideas previously acquired on them. (See chap. VI, nos. 61ff.). If the spirit made but one appearance – often of brief duration – on the same world, at each migration it would find itself in entirely different conditions. Each time, it would operate on new elements with powers and according to laws unfamiliar to it before having had time to work with known elements, to study them, and to apply them. Each time, it would be a new apprenticeship, and these incessant changes would be an obstacle to progress. The spirit must therefore remain on the same world until it has acquired the sum of knowledge and degree of perfection that such world renders possible. (See no. 31)

Thus it is and thus it must be that spirits depart for a more advanced world, leaving behind the old one on which there is nothing else to acquire – such is the principle. If there are some who leave before that time, it is obviously due to individual causes that God has weighed in the divine wisdom.

Everything in creation has an objective, without which God would neither be prudent nor wise. Besides, if the earth were only one stage in the progress of each individual, what use would it be for children who die at a very young age to come here to spend a few years, months or hours, during which they could acquire nothing? The same applies to the mentally impaired. A theory is no good unless it can resolve all issues connected with it. The issue of premature deaths has been a stumbling block for all doctrines except the Spiritist Doctrine, the only one that has resolved it rationally and completely.

For those who, for their progress, complete a normal lifespan on the earth, there is a real advantage in finding themselves in the same environment in order to continue what they had left unfinished. They often return to the same family or encounter the same persons in order either to make up for the evil they have done or to suffer the law of talion.[4]

Emigrations and immigrations of spirits

35. During the intervals between their corporeal existences, spirits are in the errant state and comprise the ambient spirit population of the globe. Through death and birth, the two populations incessantly circulate from one to the other. Hence, there are daily emigrations from the corporeal to the spirit world and immigrations from the spirit world to the corporeal: these are normal daily happenings.

36. At certain times determined by the divine wisdom, various degrees of mass emigrations and immigrations occur as a result of a great turmoil that causes enormous numbers to exit at the same time, to be soon replaced by equivalent numbers of incarnations. Therefore, one must regard destructive calamities and cataclysms as occasions for collective arrivals and departures, the providential means for renewing the globe's corporeal population and for reinvigorating it by introducing newer more purified spirit members. If in such catastrophes a large number of bodies are destroyed, they should be viewed as nothing more than *torn garments*, since not one spirit perishes. They simply switch environments. Instead of departing individually, they depart en masse – that is all the difference – whether they depart by one cause or another, they would depart sooner or later nonetheless.

The rapid, nearly instantaneous renewals that occur in the spirit element of the population as a result of destructive calamities speed up social progress. Without the emigrations and immigrations that occur from time to time in order to give society a strong boost, it would progress extremely slowly.

It is remarkable that all the great calamities that decimate populations are always followed by an era of progress in the physical, intellectual and moral orders, and, consequently, in the societal state of the nations where they take place. The purpose of such calamities therefore is to cause a reorganization in the spirit population, which is the normal and active population of the globe.

37. This transfusion that occurs among the incarnate and discarnate populations of the same globe also occurs among the many worlds, whether individually under normal conditions, or en masse under special circumstances. Hence, there are collective emigrations and immigrations from one world to another. This results in introducing entirely new members into the population of a globe. New races of spirits come to mix in with present ones, thereby forming new races of humans. Now, since spirits never lose what they have acquired, they bring with them their intelligence and the intuition of the knowledge they possess. Consequently, they imprint their particular character on the corporeal race they have come to animate. For this, they do not need new bodies to be created specially for their use; since the corporeal species already exists, they find bodies fully ready to receive them. They are therefore simply new inhabitants. In coming to the

earth, they at first compose part of its spirit population, and later they incarnate like the rest.

The Adamic race

38. According to the teaching of the Spirits, it was one of these great immigrations, or rather, one of these *spirit colonies* that came from another globe and gave rise to the race symbolized in the person of Adam, and for this reason is called the *Adamic race*. When it arrived here, the earth had already been populated since time immemorial, *much like the Americas when the Europeans arrived*.

The Adamic race was more advanced than those that had preceded it on the earth and was, in effect, more intelligent; it was the one that drove all the others to progress. The book of Genesis shows us that it was industrious from the start, that is was skillful in the arts and sciences without having passed through intellectual infancy, which is not characteristic of primitive races, but which does agree with the notion that it was composed of spirits who had already progressed. Everything indicates that the Adamic race is not very old on the earth, and nothing opposes it having been here for only a few thousand years; hence, the idea contradicts neither geological facts nor anthropological observations, which, quite to the contrary, tend to confirm it.

39. The doctrine according to which the entire human species came from one sole individual six thousand years ago is no longer acceptable according to the current state of our knowledge. Taken from the physical and moral order of things, the main considerations that contradict this assertion may be summed up as follows:

From the physiological point of view, certain races display characteristically particular types, a fact that prevents assigning them to a common origin. There are differences that are obviously not simple effects of the climate, since Whites who reproduce in countries predominated by Blacks do not become Blacks, and vice versa. The strength of the sun rays tans and darkens the skin, but it has never transformed a White into a Black, changed the characteristics of the face, or changed straight hair into afro-type hair. Today we know that black skin color comes from a particular subcutaneous tissue distinctive of that species.

Therefore, one must regard the Black, Mongolian and White races as having their own origins and as having come into being simultaneously or successively in different parts of the globe; their interbreeding has given rise to secondary mixed races. The physiological characteristics of the primitive races are obvious indications that they came from special types. Consequently, the same considerations apply both to humans and animals regarding the plurality of their lineage. (See chap. X, nos. 2 ff.)

40. Adam and his descendants are presented in Genesis as essentially intelligent people, who from their second generation build cities, cultivate the land and work with metals. Their progress in the arts and sciences is

rapid and sustained. Thus, it is inconceivable that this lineage would have had as its descendants numerous peoples so backward and of an intelligence so rudimentary that it approached animality, and who would have lost all traits and all remembrance of what their ancestors accomplished. A difference this radical in intellectual aptitudes and moral development attests no less clearly to a difference in origin.

41. Regardless of the geological facts, proof of the existence of human beings on the earth before the time set by Genesis may be gleaned from the population of the globe.

Without mentioning Chinese chronology, which is said to go back some thirty thousand years, authentic documentation shows that Egypt, India and other lands were populated and flourishing at least three thousand years before the Christian era, that is, one thousand years after the creation of the first man according to the biblical chronology. Recent documentation and observation leave no doubt nowadays as to the relations that existed between the Americas and the ancient Egyptians, from which one must conclude that that land mass was already populated at the time. It would thus be necessary to believe that, in one thousand years, the descendants of only one individual could cover the largest part of the earth. The reality is, such profusion would be completely contrary to all anthropological laws.[5]

42. The impossibility becomes even more obvious if one accepts the Genesis account that the flood destroyed *the entire human species* – except for Noah and his family – which could not have been very numerous in the 1,656th year of the world, that is, 2,348 years before the Christian era. Therefore, in reality, the date for the peopling of the earth would have started with Noah; however, when the Hebrews settled in Egypt 612 years after the flood, that country – not to mention others – was already a powerful empire that would have had to have been populated in less than six centuries by Noah's sole descendants, which is inadmissible.

Let us note in passing that the Egyptians welcomed the Hebrews as foreigners. It would be surprising that they had lost all recollection of a commonality of origin so close while they religiously preserved the monuments of their history.

A strict logic, corroborated by the facts, demonstrates peremptorily that humankind has been on the earth for an indeterminate amount of time, well before the time assigned by Genesis. The same applies to the diversity of the primitive lineages, because, demonstrating the impossibility of a proposition is to demonstrate the opposite proposition. If Geology were to discover authentic traces of human presence before the great diluvial period, the demonstration would be even more complete.

The doctrine of the fallen angels and paradise lost[6]

43. Worlds evolve physically through the development of matter and morally through the purification of the spirits who inhabit them. Happiness

on them is due to the predominance of good over evil, and the predominance of the good is the result of the moral advancement of the spirits. Intellectual progress is not enough, however, because intelligence can be used for evil.

Thus, as soon as a world reaches one of its periods of transformation – necessary to enable it to ascend hierarchically – mutations occur within its incarnate and discarnate population. This is when the large emigrations and immigrations take place (see no. 34, 35). Those who, in spite of their intelligence and knowledge, persevere in evil – in their rebellion against God and God's laws – would henceforth be a hindrance to subsequent moral progress and a permanent cause of problems contrary to the happiness and peacefulness of the good ones. That is why they are excluded and sent to less advanced worlds; there they will use their intelligence and intuition of previously acquired knowledge for the progress of those among whom they have been called to live. At the same time, by means of a series of pain-filled existences and arduous labor, they will expiate their past wrongs and the *intentional* hardening of their hearts.

What could they be among such new (from their point of view) peoples that are still in the infancy of barbarism but fallen angels or spirits sent in expiation? The world *from which they were expelled*, would it not be for them a *paradise lost*? Would it not be for them a *place of delight* in comparison with the harsh environment to which they have been relegated for thousands of centuries until the day when they will have deserved their deliverance? Their vague, intuitive memory of that world is like a distant mirage that reminds them of what they *lost due to their own fault*.

44. However, at the same time that evil spirits depart the world they used to inhabit, they are replaced by better spirits, perhaps coming from a world less advanced that they have merited leaving behind, and for whom the new habitation is a reward. Because the spirit population has been renewed and purged of its worst members, after some time the moral state of that world is improved.

Such changes are sometimes partial, that is, limited to one culture or race. At other times, they are widespread, when the period for renewal for the entire globe has come.

45. The Adamic race displays all the characteristics of a proscribed race. The spirits that comprised it were exiled to the earth, which was already populated, but with primitive human beings immersed in ignorance. They had the mission of enabling them to progress by bringing amongst them the light of a developed intelligence. Is this not actually the role that this race has played until today? Its intellectual superiority shows that the world it left behind was more advanced than the earth. However, this world had to enter a new phase of progress, and due to their own obstinacy, these spirits were not up to this task. They would have been out of place and would have become an obstacle to the providential headway of things. Consequently, they were expelled, while others more deserving began to replace them.

In relegating that race to this earth of labor and suffering, God had reason to tell them, “You shall gather your nourishment with the sweat of your brow.” However, out of divine mercy God promised to send them a *Savior*, that is, one who would shine a light on the path they were to follow so that they could leave this place of misery, this *hell,* and attain to the bliss of the elect. God sent this Savior in the person of Christ, who taught the law of love and charity unknown to them, and which would be their true anchor of salvation.

It is with the same objective of enabling humankind to advance in a determined sense that high order spirits – although without Christ’s qualities – incarnate from time to time on the earth to carry out special missions that simultaneously result in their own personal advancement if they fulfill them according to the objectives of the Creator.

46. Without reincarnation, God’s promise and Christ’s mission would have been senseless. Let us suppose that the soul of each human being is actually created at the birth of its body and that it does nothing except to appear and then disappear from the earth for good. There would be no relationship between those who came between Adam and Christ, nor between those who have come since Christ; they would all be strangers to one another. God’s promise of a Savior would not apply to Adam’s descendants if their souls had not yet been created. So that Christ’s mission could correspond to God’s words, it would be necessary for it to apply to the same souls. If such souls are new, however, they could not be stained by the wrong of the first father, who is a carnal father and not a spiritual one. Otherwise, God would have *created* souls stained by a wrong that could not apply to them because they did not yet exist at the time. The common doctrine of original sin consequently implies the need for a link between the souls of Christ’s time and those of Adam’s; it implies, therefore, reincarnation.

If you state instead that all those souls made up a part of the colony of spirits exiled on earth at the time of Adam and that they were stained with vices that had caused them to be excluded from a better world, then you will have the only reasonable interpretation of original sin, a sin that is proper to each individual and not the result of his or her responsibility for the wrong of another whom he or she has never known. If you say that those souls or spirits are reborn many times on the earth to live corporeally in order to progress and purify themselves, and that Christ came to enlighten *those same souls* not only about their past lives but also about their subsequent ones, then you will give his mission a real and serious objective acceptable to reason.

47. A familiar example, striking by its similarity, will make the principles that have just been set forth even more comprehensible.

On May 24, 1861, the frigate *Iphigenia* transported a disciplinary company of 291 men to New Caledonia. When they arrived, the commander of the colony gave them an order for the day, as follows:

“When you set your feet upon this far-off land, you will have already understood the role reserved for you.
“At the example of the brave sailors of our navy serving in your presence, you will help us bring with distinction the banner of civilization into the midst of the primitive tribes of New Caledonia. Is this not a fine and noble mission, I ask you? You shall fulfill it worthily.
“Listen to the voice and advice of your superiors. I am their commander; may my words be well understood.
“The choice of your commander, your officers, your subordinates and corporals is a sure guarantee for all efforts that will be made to render you excellent soldiers, and, I might add, to elevate you to the stature of good citizens and transform you into honored colonists *if you so desire*.
“Your discipline will be harsh and so it must be. In our hands you can be sure it will be firm and unbending, but also just and paternal. It will know how to discern error from vice and degradation…”
Here we have men who because of bad conduct have been expelled from a civilized country and sent to a barbaric culture as punishment. What did their leader tell them? “You broke the laws of your own country. You were cause for trouble and scandal and you were expelled. They sent you here, but here you can redeem your past. Through labor, you will be able to create an honorable position and become honest citizens. You have a fine mission to fulfill: bringing civilization to these wild tribes. The discipline will be harsh but just, and we will know how to discern those who proceed well. Your fate is in your own hands; you can improve it *if you so desire*, because you have free will.”
For those men relegated to the midst of the wild, was their motherland not a paradise lost because of their wrongs and their rebellion against the law? In that far-off land were they not fallen angels? Was not the language of their leader that which God used in addressing the spirits exiled on earth: “You disobeyed my laws and for that you were expelled from the world where you could have lived happily and peacefully. Here, you shall be condemned to labor; however, through good behavior you will merit pardon and regain the homeland you lost because of your own fault, that is, the heaven you have lost?”
48. At first sight, the notion of a fall seems to contradict the principle that spirits cannot regress. However, one must consider that it is not the case of a return to the primitive state. The spirit, notwithstanding its lower position, loses nothing of what it has acquired. Its moral and intellectual development remains the same, whatever may be the environment into which is has been placed. It is in the situation of the man and woman of the world condemned to prison for their crimes; certainly, they are disgraced and fallen from a societal point of view, but they become neither more stupid nor more ignorant.
49. Would we believe that those men sent to New Caledonia are suddenly going to become models of virtue? Are they going to suddenly be absolved

of their past errors? One would have to not know humanity to believe so. For the same reason, the spirits of the Adamic race, once transplanted in the land of exile, did not instantly shed their pride and their evil instincts. For a long time they retained the tendencies they brought with them, a vestige of the old yeast – now, is this not original sin?

[1] See “Explanatory Note”, p. 545 – Tr.

[2] See The Spirits’ Book, (2nd ed.) chap. XI, nos. 592 ff. – Tr.

[3] See “Explanatory Note”, p. 545 – Tr.

[4] Lex Talionis is latin for Law of Retaliation. This concept is derived from the Mosaic law “an eye for an eye; a tooth for a tooth”, which is a variation of the original concept promulgated under the Code of Hammurabi (Wikipedia contributors, “Lex Talionis Fraternitas,” Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia, http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Lex_Talionis_Fraternitas&oldid=229931576). For an example of the law of talion, see Heaven and Hell, pt. 2, chap. VIII, Antonio B. – Tr.

[5] The 1867 World’s Fair displayed antiquities from Mexico that left no doubt as to the connections the peoples of this country had with the ancient Egyptians. On a placard affixed to the Mexican temple at the Fair, Mr. Leon Mechedin stated:

“From the human history point of view, it is not proper to prematurely publish discoveries made by the recent scientific expedition to Mexico. Nonetheless, nothing should keep the public from knowing nowadays that that exploration has pointed to the existence of a large number of cities that disappeared over time, but which the pick and fire can draw from their burial shroud. In all, the excavations uncovered three layers of civilizations, which seem to give the American world a remarkable ancientness.” This is how science belies daily the claims of the doctrine that limits to 6,000 years the appearance of humankind on the earth and claims that it derives from one single founder. – Auth.

[6] In the Jan. 1862 issue of Revue Spirite, when we published an article on the interpretation of the doctrine of the fallen angels, we presented this theory as a hypothesis, with no other authority than that of a debatable personal opinion, because, at the time, we lacked elements sufficiently complete for an absolute assertion. We put it out as a trial essay, seeking to elicit examination of the issue, fully determined to abandon it or modify it if need be. Today, however, this theory has endured the test of universal control. It has not only been accepted by the majority of Spiritists as the most rational and most in agreement with God’s justice, but has also been confirmed by most of the instructions given by the Spirits on the subject. The same applies to the origin of the Adamic race. – Auth.

CHAPTER XII

The Mosaic Genesis

The six days • Paradise lost

The six days[1]

1. *CHAPTER I – 1. In the beginning, God created heaven and the earth – 2. The earth was uniform and entirely barren; darkness covered the face of the deep and the Spirit of God hovered over the waters. – 3. And God said: Let light be made, and light was made. – 4. God saw that the light was good and he separated the light from the darkness. – 5. He gave to the light the name day and to the darkness the name night; and evening and morning made the first day.*

6. God also said: Let the firmament be made in the midst of the waters, and let it separate waters from waters. – 7. And God made the firmament; and he separated the waters that were beneath the firmament from those that were above the firmament. And thus it was. – 8. And God gave to the firmament the name heaven; and evening and morning made the second day.

9. God said further: Let the waters that are under heaven be gathered into only one place, and let the dry element appear. And thus it was. – 10. God gave to the dry element the name land and he called all the gathered waters ocean. And he saw that this was good. – 11. God said further: Let the land produce green plants that bear seed, and fruit trees that bear fruit, each according to its species, and let them contain their seeds within them in order to reproduce on the earth. And so it was. – 12. The earth thus produced green plants that bore their seed according to their species, and fruit trees that contained their seeds within them, each one according to its species. And God saw that it was good. – 13. And evening and morning made the third day.

14. God also said: Let bodies of light be made in the firmament of heaven in order to separate the day from the night, and let them serve as signs to mark the time and the seasons, the days and the years. – 15. Let them shine in the firmament of heaven and illumine the earth. And thus it was done. – 16. God then made two great luminous bodies, one larger to preside over the day, and the other smaller to preside over the night; he also made the stars. – 17. And he put them in the firmament of heaven to shine upon the earth. – 18. It was thus done so that they would preside over the day and the night and to separate the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good. – 19. And evening and morning made the fourth day.

20. And God said further: Let the waters produce living animals that swim in the water and birds that fly over the earth and beneath the firmament of heaven. – 21. God thus created the great fishes and all the animals that have life and movement, which the waters produced, each one according to its species, and he also created all the birds according to their species. And he saw that it was good. – 22. He blessed them, saying: Grow and multiply, and occupy the waters of the ocean; and let the birds multiply over the earth. – 23. And evening and morning made the fifth day.

24. God also said: Let the earth produce living animals, each one according to its species: domestic animals, reptiles and wild beasts of the earth in their different kind. And so it was. – 25. Thus, God made the wild beasts of the earth according to their kind, the domestic animals and all the reptiles, each according to its kind. And God saw that it was good.

26. Next he said: Let us make man in our image and likeness, and let him rule over the fishes in the ocean, the birds in the sky, the beasts upon all the earth and over all the reptiles that move upon the earth. – 27. Thus, God created man in his image and he created them in the image of God, and he created them male and female. – 28. God blessed them and said to them: Grow and multiply, occupy the earth and subdue it, and rule over the fish in the ocean, over the birds in the sky and over all the animals that move upon the earth. Furthermore, God said: I give to you all the plants that bear their seed upon the earth and all the trees that carry their seeds within them, each one according to its kind, so that they may serve as your food; – 30. And to all the animals of the earth, all the birds in the sky and everything that moves upon the earth, and which are alive and animated so that they may be fed. And thus it was done. – 31. God saw all the things he had made; and that they were all very good. – 23. And evening and morning made the sixth day.

CHAPTER II. – 1. Heaven and earth were thus finished with all their ornaments. – 2. On the seventh day, God finished all the work that he had made, and he rested on the seventh day after having finished all his work. – 3. He blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because on this day he ceased producing all the works that he had created. – 4. Such is the origin of heaven and earth, and thus they were created on the day that the Lord made each one. – 5. And thus he created all the plants of the fields before they came out of the earth and all the grass of the plains before they grew, because

the Lord God had not yet made it rain upon the earth and there were no men to work it. But a spring rose from the ground which watered the whole surface.
7. Then the Lord God formed man from the clay of the earth and he spread over their face a breath of life, and man became living and animated.

2. Following the explanations contained in the preceding chapters on the origin and constitution of the universe, according to the data furnished by science for the physical part and according to Spiritism for the spiritual aspect, it would be useful to place them in parallel with the Genesis text of Moses so that everyone can make a comparison and judge knowingly. A few supplementary explanations will suffice to make comprehensible the parts that require special clarification.

3. On certain points there is certainly a noteworthy agreement between the Mosaic Genesis and scientific doctrine; however, it would be erroneous to believe that it would be enough simply to replace the six twenty-four hour days of creation with six indeterminate periods in order to find a complete similarity. It would be a no less great mistake to believe that, apart from the allegorical meaning of some of the words, Genesis and science walk side by side, as if one were only a paraphrase of the other.

4. Let us note from the start that, as we have stated (chap. VII, no. 14), the number of six geological periods is arbitrary, since more than twenty-five well characterized formations may be counted. This number merely marks out the large general phases; it was adopted in the beginning only to match the biblical text as much as possible regarding a time not too long ago when it was believed that science was to be verified by the Bible. This is why that, in order to be more readily accepted, the authors of most cosmogonical theories endeavored to make science harmonize with the sacred text. Once supported by the experimental method, science felt stronger and became emancipated; today, it is the Bible that is to be verified by science.

Moreover, in taking as its starting point the formation of the granitic layers, geology does not include in its periods the primitive state of the earth. It is no longer concerned with the sun, the moon, the stars or the universe as a whole, which belongs to astronomy. In order to enter the framework of Genesis, one would thus have to add a primary period embracing this order of phenomena, and which could be called the *astronomical period*.

Moreover, the diluvial period is not considered by all geologists as forming a distinct period, but as a transitory and temporary event that did not change the globe’s climactic state notably or mark a new phase for plant and animal species, since, with few exceptions, the same species are to be found both before and after the flood. Thus, we can set aside that period without compromising the truth.

5. The following comparative table, in which the phenomena that characterized each of the six periods are summed up, allows us to embrace the whole and judge the relationships and differences between them and the biblical Genesis.

I. ASTRONOMICAL PERIOD. Agglomeration of the universal cosmic matter at one point in space into a nebula, which, Thick atmosphere loaded with water vapor and all types of vaporizable matter.
II. PRIMARY PERIOD. Hardening of the earth's surface through cooling; formation of the granitic layers. – Thic
III. TRANSITION PERIOD. – The waters cover the entire surface of the globe. – First deposits of sediment formed b lycopods, herbaceous plants. Colossal vegetation. – First marine animals: zoophytes, pol
IV. SECONDARY PERIOD. Little unevenness in earth's surface; shallow and swampy waters. Less burning temperat large aquatic reptiles and amphibians.
V. TERTIARY PERIOD. – Large upheavals of the solid crust; formation of the continents. Retreat of the waters t **UNIVERSAL FLOOD**
VI. FOURTH OR POST-DILUVIAL PERIOD. – Alluvial terrains. Current plants and animals. – Humankind.

6. An initial fact that stands out from the comparative table above is that the work of each of the six days does not correspond as strictly as many believe to each of the six geological periods. The most noticeable concordance is that of the sequence of organic beings, which is approximately the same, and that of the appearance of humankind last. Now, this is an important fact.

There is also coincidence, not as to the numeric order of the periods, but as to the fact per se in the passage where it is stated that, on the third day, "the waters that are under heaven be gathered into only one place, and let the dry element appear." This is the expression of what occurred in the tertiary period, when the upheavals of the solid crust caused the uncovering of the continents and the waters to recede to form the oceans. It was only then that land animals appeared according to both geology and Moses.

7. When Moses said that creation took six days, did he mean 24-hour days or did he understand this word to mean a period or span of time? The first hypothesis is most likely if one refers to the text itself; foremost because such is the proper meaning of the Hebrew word *ïôm*, translated as *day;* then, the specification of evening and morning, which limit each of the six days, supports the assumption that he meant ordinary days. There can be no doubt in this respect when he states in verse 5: "He gave to the light the name *day* and to the darkness the name *night*; and evening and morning made the first day." Obviously, this can apply only to a 24-hour day divided by light and darkness. The meaning is even more precise when he states in verse 17, speaking of the sun, moon and stars, "He put them in the firmament of heaven to shine upon the earth, to preside over the day and the night and to separate the light from the darkness. And evening and morning made the fourth day."

Moreover, everything in creation was miraculous, and within the context of miracles, people could easily believe that the earth was made in six 24-hour days, especially when the primary natural laws were unknown. This belief was shared by all civilized peoples up to the time in which geology appeared, facts in hand, demonstrating its impossibility.

8. One of the points most criticized in Genesis has been the creation of the sun after the light. Attempts have been made to explain this with data furnished by geology itself, stating that in the early times of its formation, the earth's atmosphere was loaded with dense and opaque vapors and did not allow the sun to be seen, thereby concluding that it did not exist as far as the earth was concerned. This reasoning perhaps might be acceptable if there had been inhabitants at that time to verify the presence or absence of the sun; now, according to Moses himself, there were only plants, which by all accounts, could not have grown and multiplied without the action of the sun's heat.

Thus, there is obviously an anachronism in the order Moses assigns for the creation of the sun; however, unintentionally or not, he was not wrong in saying that the light preceded the sun.

The sun is not the principle universal light, but a concentration of luminous elements upon one spot, or to state it another way, of the fluid that, in given circumstances, acquires luminous properties. This fluid, which is the cause, must have necessarily preceded the sun, which is only an effect. The sun is *cause* with respect to the light it radiates, but it is an *effect* with respect to what it received.

In a dark room, one lit candle is a tiny sun. What is done to light the candle? The illuminating property has developed from the luminous fluid, and this fluid has become concentrated on one spot. The candle is the cause of the light that shines throughout the room, but if the luminous principle did not exist before the candle, it could not have been lit in the first place.

The same applies to the sun. The error comes from the long-standing wrong idea that the entire universe began with the earth, and it was not understood that the sun could have been created after the light. It is now known that before our sun and earth, millions of suns and earths existed, which consequently enjoyed the light. Moses' assertion, then, is perfectly exact in principle; however, it is wrong in stating that the earth was created before the sun. The earth is subject to the sun in its orbital movement, so it must have been formed afterward; this is what Moses could not have known, because he did not know about the law of gravity.

The same thought may be found in the Genesis of the ancient Persians. In the first chapter of the Avesta, Ahura Mazda, narrating the world's origin, states: "I created the light that was to illumine the sun, the moon and the stars." (*Dictionnaire de mythologie universelle.*) The form here is certainly clearer and more scientific than in Moses and needs no comment.

9. Moses obviously shared the most primitive beliefs about cosmology. Like everyone else at his time, he believed in the solidity of the heavenly canopy

and the upper repositories for the waters. This idea is expressed without allegory or ambiguity in this passage (verses 6 ff.): “God said, ‘Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters to separate waters from waters. God made the firmament and he separated the waters that were beneath the firmament from those that were above the firmament.’” (See chap. V, *Ancient and modern theories about the world,* nos. 3-5)

According to one ancient belief, water was considered to be the principle, the primitive generative element; therefore, Moses was not speaking of the creation of the waters, which seemed to exist already. “Darkness covered the deep,” means the depths of space, which imagination vaguely portrayed as being occupied by the waters and existing in darkness prior to the creation of the light. That is why Moses says, “The Spirit of God hovered over the waters.” Since the earth was supposedly formed in the midst of the waters, it was necessary to isolate it; thus, it was believed that God made the firmament, the solid canopy that separated the waters above from those that were on the earth.

In order to understand certain parts of Genesis, it is indispensable to look at it from the point of view of the cosmological ideas of the time of which it is the reflection.

10. Due to the progress of physics and astronomy, such a doctrine is not sustainable.[2] Nevertheless, Moses attributed these words to God himself; thus, since they express data that is notoriously erroneous, one must consider: either God was mistaken in the narrative about his work, or the narrative is not a divine revelation after all. Since the first supposition is impossible, one must conclude that Moses was expressing his own ideas. (See chap. I, no. 3)

11. Moses is more correct when he says that God formed the man from the clay of the earth.[3] In fact, Science shows us (chap. X) that the human *body* is composed of elements taken from inorganic matter, in other words, from the clay of the earth.

The woman formed from one of Adam’s ribs is an allegory that is obviously childish if taken literally, but is profound in meaning. Its purpose is to show that woman is of the same nature as man and is consequently his equal before God, and not a separate creature to be enslaved and treated like a pariah. Made from his very flesh, the image of equality is much more expressive than if she had been formed separately from the same clay; it intends to tell the man that she is his equal and not his slave, and that he must love her as part of himself.

12. For uneducated spirits who had no idea about general laws, and who were incapable of comprehending the whole and of conceiving of the infinite, this miraculous and instantaneous creation had something fantastic about it that struck their imagination. The picture of the universe taken from nothingness in only a few days by a single act of the creative will was for such spirits the most impressive sign of God’s power. What portrait of such power could be more sublime and poetic than those words, “God said,

‘Let there be light and there was light!’” Creating the universe through the slow and gradual fulfillment of the laws of nature, God would have seemed less great and less powerful. Something extraordinary was necessary beyond ordinary ways; otherwise, they would have said that God was no more skillful than humans. A scientific and rational theory about creation would have left them cold and indifferent.

Therefore, we do not reject the biblical Genesis; on the contrary, we study it as if we were studying the childhood history of cultures. It is an epopee rich in allegories whose hidden meaning must be searched for and which must be commented upon and explained in the light of reason and science. Having highlighted the poetic beauties and veiled teachings under the allegorical form, it is necessary to honestly point out its errors in the interest of religion itself. Religion will be more respected when such errors are no longer imposed on faith as truths, and God will seem greater and more powerful only when the divine name is not mixed with controversial facts.

Paradise lost[4]

13. *CHAPTER II – 9. The Lord God had planted a garden of delights, in which he put the man that he had formed. – The Lord God had also produced from the earth all kinds of trees beautiful to look at and whose fruits were pleasing to the palate, and the tree of life in the midst of this paradise[5] along with the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Yahweh Elohim caused to come from the earth (min haadama) every tree beautiful to look upon and good for eating, and the tree of life (vehetz hachayim) in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil).*

15. Then the Lord took the man and placed him in the paradise of delights in order for him to cultivate and tend it. – 16. He also gave him this order, and said to him, “You may eat from all the trees of paradise (Yahweh Elohim ordered the man (hal haadam) by saying: From every tree in the garden (hagan) you may eat). – 17. But do not eat the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil; for as soon as you eat from it you shall most certainly die. (And from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (oumehetz hadaat tob vara) you will not eat, for on the day on which you eat of it, you shall die).

14. *CHAPTER III – 1. The serpent was the sliest of all the animals that the Lord God had formed on the earth. It said to the woman, “Why did God order you not to eat the fruit of all the trees of paradise? (And the serpent (nâhâsch) was the most cunning of all the land animals that Yahweh Elohim had made; it said to the woman (el haïscha): Did Elohim say, “You shall not eat from any tree in the garden?) – 2. The woman answered, “We may eat the fruit of all the trees that are in paradise. (She, the woman, said to the serpent, “The fruit (miperi) of the trees in the garden we may eat.) – 3. But as for the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of paradise, God ordered us not to eat of it or touch it, for fear that we would be in danger of dying. – 4. The serpent replied to the woman, “Certainly, you will not die; – 5. But it is that God knows that as soon as you have eaten of that fruit, your eyes will be opened and you will be like gods, knowing good and evil.”*

6. The woman then considered that the fruit of that tree would be good to eat; that it was pleasant to look at. And having taken it, she ate it and gave it to her husband to eat also. (She, the woman, saw that the tree was good as food and that the tree was desirable for UNDERSTANDING (leaskil), and she took of its fruit, etc.).

8. And because they heard the voice of the Lord God, who was strolling in paradise after midday as a mild breeze was blowing, they withdrew to the midst of the trees of paradise in order to hide from his face.

9. Then the Lord God called to Adam and said to him, “Where are you?” – 10. Adam answered, “I heard your voice in paradise and was afraid because I was naked; that is why I hid myself. – 11. The Lord responded, “And how did you know that you were naked unless it was because you ate the fruit of the tree from which I forbade you to eat?” – 12. Adam answered, “The woman whom you gave me as a companion gave me the fruit of that tree and I ate it.” – 13. The Lord God said to the woman, “Why did you do that?” She responded, “The serpent deceived me and I ate of that fruit.”

14. Then, the Lord God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this, you are cursed among all the animals and all the beasts of the earth; you shall crawl upon your belly and you shall eat the earth all the days of your life. – 15. I shall put enmity between you and the woman, between her race and yours. She shall smash your head and you shall try to bite her heel."
16. God said to the woman also, "I shall afflict you with many ills during your pregnancy; you shall give birth with pain; you shall be under the domination of your husband and he shall dominate you."
17. Next, he said to Adam, "Because you listened to the voice of your wife and you ate of the fruit of the tree of which I forbade you to eat, the earth shall be cursed because of what you have done and only with much labor shall you take your food from it throughout your whole life.
18. It shall produce thorns and briers and you shall eat the plants of the earth. – 19. And you shall eat your bread with the sweat of your face until you return to the earth from which you were taken, for you are dust and to dust you shall return."
20. And Adam gave his wife the name Eve, which means life, because she was the mother of all the living.
21. The Lord God also made for Adam and his wife garments of skins with which they clothed themselves. –
22. And he said, "Adam has become as one of us, knowing good and evil. Therefore, let us prevent him from taking from the tree of life, so that he does not take of its fruit also, and upon eating that fruit, he shall live forever. (Yahweh Elohim said, "Thus, the man has become as one of us for the knowledge of good and evil; and now he can stretch out his hand and take from the tree of life (veata pen ischlachyado velakach mehetz hachayim); he will eat from it and live forever.)
23. The Lord God made him leave the garden of delights in order to work at cultivating the earth from which he was taken.
24. And having expelled him, he placed cherubim[6] in front of the garden of delights; they made a flaming sword shimmer to guard the way that led to the tree of life.

15. Beneath a puerile and sometimes ridiculous imagery – if we stop at the form – an allegory often hides the greatest truths. At first sight, has there ever been a more absurd fable than that of Saturn, a god devouring stones that he took as being his sons? However, at the same time, there can be nothing more profoundly philosophical and true than this figure if we search for its moral meaning! Saturn is the personification of time; since all things are the work of time, he is the father of everything that exists; but everything is also destroyed with time. Saturn devouring the stones is the symbol of destruction over time of the most lasting objects – his sons – since they were formed with time. And who escapes such destruction according to this same allegory? Jupiter, the symbol of higher intelligence, of the spiritual principle, which is indestructible. This image is so natural that, in modern language and without allusion to this ancient fable, it is said of a thing that has deteriorated over a stretch of time, that it has been devoured by time, gnawed and ravaged by it.

In reality, all pagan mythology is nothing more than a huge allegorical picture of the various good and evil facets of humankind. For whoever searches for the spirit in it, it is a complete course in the highest philosophy, as is also the case with our modern fables. Absurdity would be to take the form as being the substance.

16. The same applies to Genesis, where it is necessary to see great moral truths beneath material figures, which, if taken literally, would be as absurd as if, regarding our own fables, we were to take literally the scenes and dialogs attributed to animals.

Adam is the personification of humankind; his wrong individualizes the weakness of human beings, where the material instincts that they are unable to resist predominate.[7]
The tree – as in the tree of life – is the symbol of spiritual life; like the tree of knowledge, it is the consciousness of good and evil that humans acquire in order to develop their intelligence and free will, and by means of which they choose between the two. It signals the point at which the human soul ceases to be guided solely by the instincts, takes possession of its freedom and incurs responsibility for its acts.
The fruit of the tree is the symbol of the material objects of human desire; it is the allegory of greed and ambition; in a single picture it sums up the reasons for the inducement to evil; eating it is to yield temptation. It grows in the middle of the garden of delights to show that seduction is at the center of pleasure and to remind us that, if humans give preponderance to material pleasures, they are kept bound to the earth and far from their spiritual destiny.[8]
The death with which Adam is threatened if he transgresses the prohibition is a warning of the inevitable physical and moral consequences resulting from violating the divine laws that God has engraved on his conscience. It is quite obvious that the subject here is not bodily death, because after his wrong, Adam continued to live for a long time; rather, it refers to spiritual death, or in other words, the loss of the assets that result from moral advancement, a loss that is symbolized in his expulsion from the garden of delights.
17. Nowadays, the serpent is far from personifying slyness. Thus, here, with respect to its form rather than its character, it is an allusion to the perfidy of bad counsel, which slithers like a serpent, and so, for that very reason, is often not to be trusted. Furthermore, if the serpent was condemned to crawl upon its belly for having deceived the woman, this would mean that it formerly had legs, and in that case it was not actually a serpent. Why, then, impose on the naïve and credulous faith of children such obvious allegories as truths, and which, in violating their reason, will make them later regard the Bible as a web of absurd fables?
Additionally, one should note that the Hebrew word *nâhâsch*, translated as *serpent*, comes from the root *nâhâsch*, which means *to cast spells, to divine occult matters*, and can thus mean spell-caster*, diviner*. It is found with this meaning in Genesis 44:5,15 in reference to the goblet that Joseph ordered to be hidden in Benjamin's bag: "The goblet that you have stolen is that from which my Lord drinks, and which he uses to divine (*nâhâsch*).[9] – Did you not know that no one is my equal in the knowledge of divination (*nâhâsch*)?" In Numbers 23:23 it states, "There are no spells in Jacob, nor diviners in Israel." Consequently, the word *nâhâsch* also had the meaning of *serpent*, or reptile, which spell-casters pretended to be able to enchant, or which they used in their spell-casting.

It was only in the Septuagint version (which, according to Hutcheson, corrupted the Hebrew text in several places) written in Greek in the second century B.C. that the word *nâhâsch* was translated as *serpent*. The inaccuracies of this version are no doubt connected to modifications that the Hebrew language had gone through from time to time, because the Hebrew of Moses' time was by then a dead language that differed from common Hebrew, just as ancient Greek and literary Arabic differ from modern Greek and Arabic.[10]

Hence, it is likely that Moses understood the seducer of the woman to be the indiscrete desire to know about secret matters aroused by the spirit of divination, which is in agreement with the original meaning of the word *nâhâsch*, diviner, and on the other hand, with these words: "God knows that as soon as you have eaten the fruit, your eyes will be opened and you will be like *gods*. – The woman saw that the tree was desirable for understanding (*léaskil*) and she took of its fruit." One must not forget that Moses wanted to proscribe among the Hebrews the art of divination in use among the Egyptians, hence his prohibition against questioning the dead and his prohibition regarding the spirit of Python. (See *Heaven and Hell* according to Spiritism, chap. XII)

18. The passages where it is stated that, "The Lord strolled through paradise after midday when a soft wind was blowing" is a naïve image and a bit puerile, which criticism has not failed to point out; however, there is nothing surprising in it if we recall the idea the Hebrews of early times had about the Divinity. For such unsophisticated minds incapable of conceiving abstractions, God had to have a concrete form, and they related everything to humanity as their sole point of comparison. That is why Moses spoke to them as children by using discernible images. In the case at hand, the Supreme Power was personified, just as the pagans personified the virtues, vices and abstract ideas with allegorical figures. Later on, humans rid themselves of the idea of form, like a child who becomes an adult and seeks the moral meaning in the tales with which he or she used to be rocked to sleep. Thus, one must regard this passage as an allegory of the Divinity itself watching over the objects of creation. The great Rabbi Wogue translated it this way: "They heard the *voice* of the Eternal God moving through the garden from the side from which the day comes."

19. If Adam's wrong consisted literally in having eaten a fruit, such wrong, due to its almost puerile nature, incontestably could not justify the harshness with which he was struck, nor could one any more rationally believe that the event could have been as is generally supposed; otherwise, by considering the incident as an unforgivable crime, God would be condemning his own work, since he had created the man for propagation. If Adam had understood in this sense the prohibition against touching the fruit of the tree and had scrupulously conformed to it, where would humankind be and what would have become of the Creator's designs?

God did not create Adam and Eve to remain alone on the earth, and the proof of this is in the very words that he speaks to them right after having formed them and when they were still in the earthly paradise: “God blessed them and said, ‘Increase and multiply; *fill* the earth and subdue it.’” (Gen. 1:28). Since the multiplying of human beings was already a law in the earthly paradise, their expulsion from it could not have been caused by the supposed incident.

What has given credibility to this supposition is the feeling of shame that Adam and Eve felt before God, and which led them to hide themselves. However, this very shame is a figure of comparison: it symbolizes the confusion that all guilty persons feel in the presence of someone they have offended.

20. What then, exactly, was that wrong which was so great that it could cause the perpetual reprobation of all the descendants of the one who committed it? The fratricidal Cain was not dealt with so severely. No theologian can define it logically, because they all take it literally and thus go around in a vicious circle.

Today, we know that this wrong was not an isolated, personal act by an individual, but that, beneath a unique allegorical event, it comprises the whole of the sins for which imperfect earthly humankind is guilty, and which are summed up in these words: *the infraction of God’s laws*. This is why the wrong of the first man, symbolizing all humankind, is portrayed as an act of disobedience.

21. By telling Adam that he would take his food from the earth with the sweat of his brow, God symbolizes the obligation of labor; but why does he make labor a punishment? What would human intelligence be if it were not developed through labor? What would the earth be if it were not fertilized, transformed and made habitable through intelligent human labor?

Genesis 2:5,7 states, “The Lord God had not yet caused it to rain upon the earth and there were no human beings to work it. Then the Lord formed man from the clay of the earth.” These words, much like “*Fill the earth,*” show that, from their beginning, humans were intended to occupy *all the earth and cultivate it*, and that, moreover, the terrestrial paradise was not a circumscribed place in one corner of the globe. If the cultivating of the earth had been the consequence of Adam’s wrong, it would follow that, if Adam had not sinned, the earth would have remained uncultivated, and that God’s objectives would not have been accomplished.

Why did God tell the woman that, because she had committed her wrong, she would give birth in pain? How could the pain of childbirth be a punishment, since it is the consequence of the organism, and that it is physiologically proven that it is necessary? How could something that is in accordance with the laws of nature be a punishment? This is what the theologians have not yet been able to explain, and they will never be able to explain it as long as they do not abandon the point of view where they have

placed themselves. Nonetheless, these seemingly contradictory words can be explained.

22. First of all, we notice that if, at the moment of Adam and Eve's creation, their souls were taken from nothingness – as is still taught – they would have been inexperienced in all things; they could not have known what it meant to die. Since they were *alone* on earth while they lived in the earthly paradise, they never could have seen anyone die. Then how could they have understood what God's death threat entailed? How could Eve have understood that giving birth in pain would be a punishment since she herself had just been born to life, had never had children, and was the only woman in the world?

Therefore, God's words would have made no sense to Adam and Eve. Since they had just been taken from nothingness, they could not have known how or why they had come from it. They could have understood neither the Creator nor the reason for his prohibition. Without any experience of life's conditions, they sinned like children who act without discernment, which makes even more incomprehensible the terrible responsibility that God laid upon them and upon the whole of humankind.

23. What comprises an impasse for theology, Spiritism explains without difficulty and in a rational manner by means of the preexistence of the soul and the plurality of existences, a law without which everything is a mystery and an anomaly in human life. In fact, let us believe that Adam and Eve had lived previously and everything is justified: God did not speak to them as children, but as beings capable of understanding God and who did understand – obvious proof that they had previous knowledge. Furthermore, let us admit that they had lived on a more advanced and less material world than ours, where the labor of the spirit supplants the labor of the body; that, because of their rebellion against God's law – portrayed in their disobedience – they had been excluded and exiled, as a punishment, on the earth, where due to the nature of the globe, humans are subject to bodily labor, then God would have been right in telling them: In the world where you are going to live from now on, "you shall cultivate the land and take from it your food with the sweat of your brow"; and to the woman, "You shall give birth in pain", because such is the condition of this world. (See chap. XI, nos. 31 ff.)

The earthly paradise, whose vestiges have been pointlessly searched for on earth, was the symbol for the happy world where Adam used to live, or rather the race of the spirits whom he personified. The expulsion from paradise marks the moment in which these spirits came to incarnate among the inhabitants of this world, and the change in the situation that ensued. The angel armed with the flaming sword, and who blocked the entrance to paradise, symbolizes the impossibility for spirits of lower worlds to enter higher ones before having merited it through purification. (See below, chap. XIV, nos. 8 ff.)

24. *Cain (after the death of Able) answered the Lord, "My iniquity is too great for me to obtain forgiveness. – You have expelled me today from upon the earth and I will go hide myself from your face. I will be a fugitive and wayfarer upon the earth and therefore anyone who finds me will kill me." The Lord responded, "No, this shall not happen, for whoever kills Cain shall be most severely punished." And the Lord put a sign upon Cain so that those who found him would not kill him.*
After having withdrawn from the face of the Lord, Cain became a wayfarer upon the earth and lived in the region east of Eden. – And having known his wife, she conceived and gave birth to Enoch. Cain built (vaïehi bôné; literally: was building) a city which he called Enoch, the name of his son." (Gen. 4:13-16)

25. If one takes Genesis literally, these are the conclusions: Adam and Eve were alone in the world after their expulsion from the earthly paradise; only afterward did they have their sons, Cain and Abel. Now, having killed his brother, Cain left for another region and did not see his father and mother again; they were alone once more. It was only much later, at 130 years of age, that Adam had a third son named Seth. After the birth of Seth he continued to live – according to the biblical genealogy – 800 years and had more sons and daughters.

Thus, when Cain settled to the east of Eden, there were only three persons on the earth: his father and mother and he himself, *alone,* away from them. Nonetheless, Cain had a wife and a son. What woman could that have been and where could he have found her? The Hebrew text says: *He was building a city* and not: *he built*, which implies an on-going action and not a completed one. However, a city presupposes inhabitants, because one could not presume that Cain would build it for himself, his wife and son, nor could he have built it by himself.

One must therefore infer from this very narrative that the region was already populated, and it could not have been populated with descendents of Adam, who did not have any descendents other than Cain.

The presence of other inhabitants are equally inferred by these words of Cain "I shall be a fugitive and a wayfarer and whoever finds me will kill me," and by God's response to him. Of whom could he have been afraid would kill him and of what use would have been the sign that God put upon him to save him if there was no one who would find him? Thus, if there had been other humans on the earth apart from Adam's family, it is because such humans were already there before him, which leads to this result taken from the text of Genesis itself: Adam was neither the first nor the only father of humankind. (See chap. XI, no. 34)[11]

26. The understanding brought by Spiritism concerning the relations of the spiritual principle and the material principle, the nature of the soul, its creation in a state of simplicity and unawareness, its union with the body, its unending evolutionary march through successive existences and through worlds that represent the many degrees on the path towards perfection, its gradual liberation from the influence of matter through the use of free will, the cause of its good or evil inclinations and of its aptitudes, the phenomena of birth and death, the state of the spirit in the errant state, and, finally, thefuture as a reward for its efforts to improve itself and for its

perseverance in the good, have been necessary to shed light on all the parts of the spiritual Genesis.

Thanks to this light, men and women can know henceforth where they have come from, where they are going, why they are on the earth, and why they suffer. They know that the future is in their own hands and that the duration of their captivity on this world depends on them. Rid of restrictive and trivial allegory, Genesis appears grand and worthy of the majesty, the goodness, and the justice of the Creator. Considered from this point of view, it will confound disbelief and shall triumph over it.

[1] As with the scripture quotations in the remainder of Kardec's works, we have translated the passages of Genesis from Sacy's French version, used by Kardec. – Tr.

[2] As much as this belief is in error, it is no less a fact that it is still passed on to our children as a sacred truth. It is not without trembling that educators dare to risk a timid interpretation. How can one hope to avoid making unbelievers later on? – Auth.

[3] The Hebrew term haadam, man, from which Adam is derived, and the term haadama, earth, have the same root – Auth.

[4] Some verses are followed by the literal translation of the Hebrew text, which renders the original thought more faithful. The allegorical meaning is thus more clearly emphasized – Auth.

[5] Paradise from the Latin paradisus, derived from the Greek paradeisos, garden, orchard, place planted with trees. The Hebrew term used in Genesis is hagan, which has the same meaning – Auth.

[6] From the Hebrew cherub, keroub, ox, charab, cultivator; angels of the second choir of the first hierarchy, who were represented with four wings, four faces and ox feet. – Auth.

[7] It is well known nowadays that the Hebrew word haadam is not a proper name, but means humans in general – humankind – which destroys any structure erected upon the personage of Adam – Auth.

[8] Nowhere in the text is the fruit specified as an apple; this word is to be found only in puerile versions. The term in the Hebrew text is peri, which has the same meanings as in French, without specifying the species, and could be taken in the material, moral or allegorical sense, both per se and figuratively. Among the Israelites there was no obligatory interpretation; when a word had many meanings, each person could understand it as he or she wished, provided that the interpretation was not contrary to proper grammar. The term peri was translated into Latin as malum, which could mean an apple or any other kind of fruit. It derives from the Greek melon, the participle of the verb melo: to interest, to take care of, to attract – Auth.

[9] Would this fact lead us to think that the Egyptians knew about mediumship involving a glass of water? (Revue Spirite, June 1868, p. 161) – Auth. [The article in Revue Spirite describes facts related to a type of seeing mediumship (clairvoyance) consisting in the ability of a medium to see things in a glass of water, which could be explained as fluidic images projected in the water by spirits. – Tr.]

[10] The term nâhâsch existed in the Egyptian language with the meaning of black, probably because Blacks had the gift of spell-casting and divination. This was also perhaps why the Sphinxes – of Assyrian origin – were represented by the figure of a Black. – Auth.

[11] This idea is not new. La Peyrère, the learned theologian of the 17th century, in his book Prae-Adamitae, written in Latin and published in 1655, drew from the original biblical text, adulterated through translation, obvious proof that the earth was inhabited before Adam arrived. This opinion is currently that of many enlightened clerics. – Auth.

Part two

Miracles according to spiritism

• Chapter XIII – Characteristics of miracles
• Chapter XIV – The fluids
• Chapter XV – Miracles in the Gospel

CHAPTER XIII

Characteristics of miracles

Miracles in the theological sense • Spiritism does not perform miracles • Does God perform miracles? • The supernatural and religions

Miracles in the theological sense

1. *Etymologically, the word miracle (from mirari, to admire) means admirable, something extraordinary, surprising. The Academy defines this word as an act of divine power contrary to the known laws of nature.*

In its normal acceptation, this word, like so many others, has lost its original meaning. From having a more generalized meaning, it has become restricted to a particular order of phenomena. In the thinking of the masses, a *miracle* implies the idea of a supernatural event; in the theological sense it is a derogation from the laws of nature, through which God manifests the divine power. This is actually its common acceptation, which has become its proper meaning, and it is only by comparison and metaphor that it is applied to the ordinary circumstances of life.

One of the characteristics of a miracle per se is that it is inexplicable for the very fact that it occurs outside natural laws; this is so much the idea that has been attached to it that if a miraculous event can be explained, it is no longer a miracle, no matter how surprising it may have been at first. What gives credit to miracles in the eyes of the Church is precisely their supernatural origin and the impossibility of explaining them; the Church is so set on this point that any likening of miracles to the phenomena of nature is considered heresy, an attack against the faith. The Church has excommunicated and even burned people at the stake for not having wanted to believe in certain miracles.

Another characteristic of the miracle is that it is unusual, isolated and exceptional. The moment a phenomenon is reproduced, whether spontaneously or intentionally, it shows that it is subject to a law, and henceforth, whether that law is known or not, it is no longer a miracle.

2. Science performs miracles every day in the eyes of the unlearned. If a man who was really dead were called back to life through divine intervention, it would be a true miracle because it is an event contrary to the laws of nature. However, if the man only appears to be dead, if there is still within him a vestige of *latent vitality*, and if science or a magnetic action manages to reanimate him, then to knowledgeable persons it is a natural phenomenon, whereas in the eyes of unlearned folk the event will pass as miraculous. If in the midst of certain peasants a physicist launches an electric kite and causes lightening to hit a tree, this new Prometheus will certainly be looked at as being armed with a diabolical power. However, Joshua’s stopping the movement of the sun, or rather, the earth – if one

accepts the event as factual – would be a true miracle, for there is no magnetizer endowed with power great enough to perform such a wonder.
Centuries of ignorance were steeped in miracles, because anything whose cause was unknown passed as supernatural. To the degree that science revealed new laws, the circle of the extraordinary tightened. Nevertheless, science had not yet explored the entire realm of nature, and consequently there was still a large part of it left to the extraordinary.
3. Having been expelled from the domain of materiality by science, the extraordinary took refuge in that of spirituality, which has been its last sanctuary. By demonstrating that the spirit element is one of the living forces of nature – a force incessantly acting concurrently with the material force – Spiritism brings the phenomena that result from its workings back into the realm of natural effects, because like the others, they too are subject to the laws of nature. When the extraordinary is expelled from spirituality, it will have no more reason to exist, and only then will it be said that the time of miracles has passed. (See chap. I, no. 18)

Spiritism does not perform miracles

4. Therefore, Spiritism has come to do in its own turn what each science has done when it first appeared: to reveal new laws and, consequently, to explain the phenomena that are within the jurisdiction of such laws.
Of course, these phenomena are attached to the existence of spirits and their intervention in the material world; well, it is said, that is precisely what is supernatural about them. However, it would have to be proven that the spirits and their manifestations are contrary to the laws of nature; that, in this case, there is not, nor can there be an application of one of those laws.
A spirit is nothing but a soul that has survived the body. Since the spirit does not die, it is the principal being, whereas the body is only an accessory that is destroyed. Thus, the soul's existence is as natural after incarnation as it is during. It is subject to the laws that govern the spiritual principle, just as the body is subject to those that govern the material principle. However, since these two principles have a necessary affinity, since they incessantly react on each other, and since their simultaneous action results in the movement and harmony of the whole, it follows that spirituality and materiality are two parts of the same whole, one as natural as the other, and that the former is not an exception, an anomaly in the order of things.
5. During its incarnation, the spirit acts on matter by means of its fluidic body or perispirit; the same happens outside incarnation. As a spirit and according to its capabilities, it does what it used to do as a man or woman; however, since it no longer has the corporeal body as its instrument, it uses, when necessary, the physical organs of an incarnate, who then becomes what is called a *medium*. It is like someone who cannot write by himself and thus employs the hand of a secretary, or someone who does not know a particular language and thus makes use of an interpreter. A secretary and

an interpreter are *mediums* for an incarnate, just as a medium is the secretary or interpreter for a spirit.

6. Since the environment in which spirits act and their means of doing so are not the same as in the state of incarnation, the effects are different. Such effects seem supernatural only because they are produced with the help of agents that are not the same as the ones that serve us. However, since these agents are to be found in nature, and since the manifestations occur due to certain laws, there is nothing supernatural or extraordinary about them. Before the properties of electricity were known, electrical phenomena passed as wonders in the eyes of certain people, but after their cause became known, the extraordinary disappeared. The same applies to spirit phenomena, which are no more outside natural laws than are the electric, acoustical, luminous and other types of phenomena that have served as a source for a multitude of superstitious beliefs.

7. Nonetheless, it will be said, you believe that a spirit can raise a table and hold it up in the air without any point of support; is that not a derogation from the law of gravity? Yes, from the law that is known; but do we know every law? Before experiments were performed entailing the lifting power of certain gases, who would have said that a heavy apparatus carrying several people could overcome the power of gravity? In the eyes of the common folk, would that not have seemed extraordinary, diabolical? A century ago, if anyone had proposed transmitting a message 500 leagues and receiving a response within a few minutes, that person would have been regarded as insane; and if it had been done, people would have believed that the Devil was at the person's command, because back then only the Devil was capable of traveling so quickly. Nowadays, however, not only is such a thing acknowledged as being possible, but it seems most natural. Why then could not an unknown fluid in certain circumstances have the property of counterbalancing the effect of gravity, just as hydrogen counterbalances the weight of a balloon? Actually, that is exactly what happens in the case of the table. (See *The Mediums' Book*, pt. 2, chap. IV)

8. Because they exist as part of nature, spirit phenomena have been produced throughout time; but precisely because they could not be studied through the material means available to ordinary science, they remained for a much longer time than other phenomena within the realm of the supernatural, whence Spiritism has now extracted them.

Based on inexplicable appearances, the supernatural has free reign over the imagination, which wanders around in the unknown, giving rise to superstitious beliefs. A rational explanation founded on the laws of nature brings people back down to the ground of reality, sets up a stopping point for the detours of the imagination and destroys superstition. Far from extending the realm of the supernatural, Spiritism restricts it to its farthest limits and takes away its last refuge. If it encourages belief in the possibility of certain phenomena, it hinders the belief in many others, for it demonstrates, within the sphere of spirituality, just as science does within

the sphere of materiality, what is possible and what is not. However, since it does not pretend to hold the final word on all things, not even those that are within its jurisdiction, it does not present itself as the absolute regulator of what is possible, and takes into account knowledge that is reserved for the future.

9. Spirit phenomena consist in the different modes of manifestation of the soul, or spirit, whether during incarnation or in the errant state. It is through its manifestations that the soul reveals its existence, its survival after death, and its individuality. It is judged by its effects; and since the cause is natural, the effect is also natural. It is these effects that comprise the special object of Spiritist research and study so as to arrive at as complete an understanding as possible concerning the nature and attributes of the soul, as well as the laws that govern the spiritual principle.

10. To those who deny the existence of the independent spiritual principle and, consequently, that of the individual and surviving soul, all nature is limited to tangible matter; all phenomena that are connected with spirituality are, from their point of view, supernatural and, consequently, chimerical. By not accepting the cause, they cannot accept the effect, and when the effects are patent, they attribute them to imagination, illusion and hallucination, and refuse to delve into them; hence among them the preconceived opinion that renders them incapable of judiciously appraising Spiritism because they start from the principle of denying everything that is not matter.

11. From the fact that Spiritism accepts the effects that are the consequence of the existence of the soul, it does not follow that it accepts all the effects qualified as being extraordinary or that it proposes to justify them and give them credibility; or that it is the champion of all dreamers, utopias, theoretical eccentricities or miraculous legends. One would have to know very little about it to think this way. Its adversaries think they have opposed it with an irrefutable argument, when, after having done erudite studies on the convulsionaries of Saint-Médard, the *camisards* of Cevennes or the nuns of Loudun, they discovered patent, incontestable evidence of fraud. But are such tales the gospel of Spiritism? Have its adherents ever denied that charlatanism has exploited certain incidents to its own advantage; that the imagination created them; and that fanaticism has highly exaggerated them? It is not liable for the extravagances committed in its name any more than science is liable for the abuses of ignorance, or true religion for the excesses of fanaticism. Many critics have judged Spiritism based on fairytales and popular legends, which are only fictions. It is the same as judging history based on historical romances or tragedies.

12. Spirit phenomena are most often spontaneous and are produced without any preconceived idea on the part of the persons who least think about them. Under certain circumstances they can be precipitated by agents known as *mediums*. In the former case, mediums are *unconscious* of what is produced through their intermediation; in the latter, they act with

full knowledge of the fact; hence the distinction between *conscious* and *unconscious mediums.* The latter are the most numerous and are frequently found among the most obstinate disbelievers, who thus practice Spiritism without realizing it or wanting to. For this reason, spontaneous phenomena are of crucial importance because those who obtain them cannot be suspected of deceit. Such is the case with somnambulism, which, in certain individuals is natural and unintentional, while in others it is brought on by means of magnetic action.[1]

Regardless of whether or not the phenomena are the result of an act of the will, the primary cause is exactly the same and in no way does it deviate from natural laws. Therefore, mediums produce absolutely nothing supernatural; consequently, they perform *no miracles*. Even instantaneous healings are no more miraculous than other effects because they are due to the action of a fluidic agent performing the role of a therapeutic agent, whose properties are no less natural for having been unknown until today. The epithet *thaumaturge*[2], given to certain mediums through criticism that is ignorant of the principles of Spiritism, is thus completely improper. The characterization of *miracle* given by comparison to certain types of phenomena can only lead to error regarding its true character.

13. The intervention of unseen intelligences in spirit phenomena do not render them any more miraculous than all the other phenomena caused by invisible agents, because the unseen beings who populate space are one of the forces of nature, a force whose action is as incessant upon the physical world as it is upon the moral world.

By enlightening us about this force, Spiritism gives us the key to a multitude of matters inexplicable by any other means, and which might have passed as miracles in days gone by. Just like magnetism, Spiritism reveals a law, if not unknown, at least poorly understood; or, better stated, the effects are known because they have been produced throughout time; however, the law governing them has not been, and it is the ignorance of this law that has engendered superstition. Once this law became known, the extraordinary disappeared and the phenomena entered the order of natural things. Thus, spirits perform no more of a miracle by making a table turn or the dead to write than doctors do when they bring a moribund back to life, or physicists when they make lightening hit. Those who, with the aid of this science, claimed to perform miracles would be either an ignoramus about the matter or a charlatan.

14. Since Spiritism rejects all pretension of producing extraordinary things, are there miracles outside of it in the usual acceptation of the word?

First of all, let us state that, among all the supposedly miraculous events that occurred before the coming of Spiritism, and which still occur nowadays, most, if not all, find their explanation in the new laws that it has come to reveal. These events, therefore, albeit under another name, are included in the order of spirit phenomena, and as such represent nothing supernatural. It is well understood that we are dealing only with authentic

events and not those which, under the label ‘miracles’, are the product of despicable knavery aimed at exploiting gullibility; nor are we referring to certain legendary events which could have had some truth to them originally, but which superstition enlarged to the absurd. It is these particular events on which Spiritism has come to shed a light by furnishing the means for separating error from truth.

Does God perform miracles?

15. As for miracles per se, since nothing is impossible for God, they could of course be performed by God. Has this happened? In other words, does God derogate from the laws that God has established? It is not up to humans to prejudge the acts of the Divinity and to subject them to the weakness of their understanding. Nonetheless, regarding divine matters, we have God’s own attributes as the criteria for our judgment. Supreme power is combined with supreme wisdom, from which one must conclude that God does nothing pointless.

Why, then, would God perform miracles? To attest to God’s power, it is said. However, does not God’s power manifest much more impressively through the magnificent whole of the works of creation, through the providential wisdom presiding over the tiniest parts as well as the greatest, and through the harmony of the laws that govern the universe, than through a few tiny and childish derogations that any sleight-of-hand artist knows how to imitate? What would be said of a skilled craftsman who, in order to demonstrate his ability, dismantled the clock he had built – a scientific masterpiece – just to show that he could undo what he had made? On the contrary, would his knowledge not result more from the regularity and precision of the movements?

The matter of miracles per se is not, therefore, within the jurisdiction of Spiritism; however, supported on the reasoning that God does nothing pointless, it states the following opinion: *Since miracles are not necessary for the glorification of God, nothing in the universe deviates from the general laws. God does not perform miracles, because, since the divine laws are perfect, God has no need to derogate from them.* If there are occurrences that we do not understand, it is because we still lack the necessary knowledge.

16. If we were to believe that, for reasons indiscernible to us, God could derogate unexpectedly from the laws God has established, such laws would no longer be immutable; but at least it is rational to think that only God has such power. One could not believe, however, without denying God’s omnipotence, that such power would have been given to the Spirit of Evil to undo the work of God by performing his own wonders in order to seduce even the elect, for that would imply the idea of a power equal to God’s. Nevertheless, that is what is taught. If Satan has the power to suspend the course of natural laws – which are the divine work – without God’s permission, then he is more powerful than God. Hence, God would not be

omnipotent; if God delegates such power to him – as proposed – to lead people into evil more easily, God would no longer be supremely good. In either case there is a denial of one of the attributes without which God would not be God.
The Church also distinguishes good miracles, which come from God, from evil miracles, which come from Satan. But what is the difference? Whether a miracle is satanic or divine, it would nonetheless be a derogation from the laws issued by God alone. If an individual is healed by a supposed miracle, whether by God or Satan, the person is healed nonetheless. One would have to have a very poor idea about human intelligence to think that such doctrines could be accepted nowadays.
Recognizing the possibility of certain reputedly miraculous phenomena, one must conclude that whatever the source attributed to them, they are natural effects, which, like everything else, both *spirits* and *incarnates* may use, as they can their own intelligence or scientific knowledge, for either good or for evil, depending on their goodness or perversity. A perverse being making use of his or her knowledge can thus do things that pass as wonders in the eyes of the uninformed; however, when such effects result in something good, it would be illogical to attribute them to a diabolical origin.
17. But, it is said, religion is founded on phenomena that are neither explained nor explainable. Unexplained, perhaps; unexplainable – that is a different matter. Who knows what discoveries and knowledge the future reserves for us? Without mentioning the miracle of creation – the greatest of all without argument – which today has entered the realm of universal law, do we not see, under the control of magnetism, somnambulism and Spiritism, ecstasies, visions, apparitions, perception-at-distance, instantaneous healings, suspensions in the air, oral and other types of communications with beings from the invisible world, phenomena known since time immemorial, considered yesterday as extraordinary, but shown today as belonging to the order of natural things in conformance with the constitutive law of beings? The sacred books are full of incidents of this kind, qualified as supernatural. However, since similar and even more extraordinary phenomena may be found in all the pagan religions of antiquity, then if the veracity of a religion depended on the number and nature of such incidents, then there is no telling which one would have prevailed.

The supernatural and religions

18. To insist that the supernatural is the necessary foundation of all religion, that it is the cornerstone of the Christian edifice, is to uphold a dangerous thesis. Making the bases of Christianity rest on the sole base of the extraordinary is to give it a fragile support, whose stones are coming loose every day. This thesis, of which eminent theologians have made themselves defenders, leads directly to the conclusion that, at a given time, religion will no longer be possible, not even the Christian religion, if what is

considered supernatural were shown to be natural, because no matter how many arguments are packed into it, one will not be able to maintain the belief that a particular incident is a miracle when it has been proven not to be. So, the proof that an event is not an exception to natural laws occurs when it can be explained by those same laws and when, by being able to be reproduced through the intermediation of any individual, it ceases to be the privilege of saints. It is not the *supernatural* that is necessary for religions, but rather the *spiritual principle*, which has erroneously been confused with the extraordinary, and without which no religion is possible.

Spiritism considers the Christian religion from a more elevated point of view. It gives it a more solid base than miracles: the immutable laws of God, which govern both the spiritual principle and the material principle. This base defies both time and science, because both time and science will come to sanction it.

God is no less worthy of our admiration, our recognition or our respect for not having derogated from the divine laws, which are great especially because of their immutability. There is no need of the supernatural to render to God the worship God is due. Is nature not powerful enough by itself? What else must yet be added to it to prove the supreme power? Religion will encounter fewer disbelievers the more it is sanctioned by reason at every point. Christianity has nothing to lose with such a sanction; on the contrary, it has only to gain. If there has been anything that could harm it in the opinion of certain individuals, it is precisely the abuse of the supernatural and the extraordinary.

19. It we take the word *miracle* in its etymological acceptation, in the sense of *something wonderful*, we will have unending miracles before our eyes. We breathe them in the air and walk over them with our feet, because everything in nature is a miracle.

Does one wish to give people, the unlearned, the poor in spirit an idea of God’s power? Show them that the infinite wisdom presides over everything: in the admirable organism of everything that lives, the fructification of plants, and the appropriation of all the parts of each being for its needs according to the environment into which it has been called to live. Show them God’s action in the sprig of a bush, in the flower that blooms, and in the sun that gives life to everything. Show them God’s goodness in God’s kindness for all creatures no matter how tiny they may be; in God’s providence; in the reason for each thing to exist, none of which are useless, and in the good that always comes out of an apparent and temporary evil. Especially, enable them to understand that true evil is the work of human beings and not of God. Do not seek to scare them with a picture of eternal flames, which they no longer believe in and which makes them question God’s goodness; instead, encourage them with the certainty that they will be able someday to redeem themselves and right the evil they might have committed. Show them the discoveries of science as revelations of the divine laws and not as works of Satan. Finally, teach them to read the book

of nature that is constantly open right in front of them; in that inexhaustible book, where the wisdom and goodness of the Creator is inscribed on each page. Then they will comprehend that a Being who is so great and concerned about everything, who watches over everything and foresees everything, must be supremely powerful. Farmers will see God whenever they plow their furrows and the unfortunate will bless God in their afflictions, because they will say to themselves, “If I am unhappy, it is my own fault.” Then, men and women will be truly religious and rationally religious especially, much more so than if they believe in stones that sweat blood or statues that blink their eyes and shed tears.

[1] The Mediums’ Book, pt. 2, chap. V. – Revue Spirite, examples: Dec. 1865, p. 370; Aug. 1865, p. 231. – Auth.

[2] A worker of wonders or miracles (Webster’s, 1991 op. cit.). – Tr.

CHAPTER XIV

The fluids

• *I. Nature and properties of the fluids:* The fluidic elements; The formation and properties of the perispirit; The action of spirits upon the fluids; fluidic creations; thought photography Qualities of the fluids • *II. Explanation of certain phenomena reputed to be supernatural:* Spirit or psychic sight; second sight; somnambulism; Dreams; Catalepsy; resurrections; Healings; Apparitions; transfigurations; Physical manifestations; mediumship; Obsession and possession

I. Nature and Properties of the Fluids

The fluidic elements

1. Science has provided the key to the miracles that result most particularly from the material element, either by explaining them away or by demonstrating their impossibility by means of the laws that govern matter. However, the phenomena in which the spiritual element plays a preponderant part cannot be explained solely by means of the laws of nature and are thus outside the investigations of science. This is why they possess, more than the others, the *apparent* characteristics of the extraordinary. Hence, it is within the laws that govern the spirit life that the key to the miracles of this category may be found.

2. As has already been demonstrated, the universal cosmic fluid is the primitive elementary matter, whose modifications and transformations comprise the innumerable variety of bodies found in nature (see chap. X). As the universal elementary principle, it offers two distinct states: etherization or imponderability, which may be considered the normal primitive state, and materialization or ponderability, which is in a certain way only consecutive to the former. The intermediary point is the transformation of the fluid into tangible matter. However, even then there is not a brusque transition, because our imponderable fluids may be regarded as a halfway phase between the two states. (See chap. IV, nos. 10 ff.)

Each of these two states necessarily gives rise to special phenomena: to the latter belong those of the visible world and to the former those of the invisible world. Some, called *material phenomena*, are within the jurisdiction of science per se; the others, qualified as *spirit* or *psychic phenomena* because they are most specially connected with the existence of spirits, fall within the attributions of Spiritism. Nonetheless, since the spirit life and the corporeal life are constantly in contact with each other, the phenomena of these two orders often appear simultaneously. While in the incarnate state, people can perceive only the psychic phenomena that are linked to the corporeal life; those of the *exclusive* domain of the spirit life

are outside the physical senses and can be perceived only in the spirit state. [1]

3. In the state of etherization, the cosmic fluid is not uniform. Without ceasing to be ethereal, it undergoes modifications highly varied in kind and perhaps more numerous than in the state of tangible matter. These modifications comprise the different fluids, which, even though proceeding from the same principle, are endowed with special properties and give rise to the particular phenomena of the invisible world.

Since everything is relative, these fluids have for spirits – who are fluidic themselves – an appearance as material as that of tangible objects for incarnates, and are to them what the substances of the terrestrial world are to us. They prepare and combine them to produce certain effects, just as incarnates do with their materials, although by means of different processes.

There, as in this world, however, only the most enlightened spirits are able to comprehend the role performed by the constitutive elements of their world. The unlearned spirits of the invisible world are as incapable of explaining the phenomena they witness, and in which they often mechanically take part, as the unlearned of the earth are of explaining the effects of light or electricity, or of explaining how it is that they can see and hear.

4. The fluidic elements of the spirit world are outside the scope of our analytical instruments and the perception of our senses, which have been made for tangible matter and not ethereal matter. There are those that belong to an environment that is so different from our own that we cannot imagine them except by comparisons that are as imperfect as those by which a person blind from birth would try to get an idea about the theory of colors.

Nonetheless, among such fluids there are some that are intimately connected with corporeal life and which belong in a certain manner to the earthly environment. Even though they cannot be perceived directly, their effects can be observed, just like the effects of the fluid of a magnet, which has never been seen but whose nature may be understood with certain precision. Such study is essential because it is the key to a multitude of phenomena that cannot be explained solely by the laws of matter.

5. The starting point for the universal fluid is its degree of absolute purity, about which nothing can give us an idea; the opposite point is its transformation into tangible matter. Between these two extremes are innumerable transformations that approximate one extreme or the other to varying degrees. The fluids closest to materiality, and consequently the least pure, comprise what may be called *the spiritual atmosphere of the earth*. It is within this environment – also comprised of various degrees of purity – that the incarnate and discarnate spirits of the earth absorb the elements needed for the economy of their existence. As subtle and

intangible as these fluids may be to us, they are nevertheless of a rather coarse nature when compared to the ethereal fluids of the higher spheres.
The same occurs on the surface of all worlds, except for the differences in their constitution and the conditions of vitality proper to each one. The less material the life on them, the less affinity the spiritual fluids have with matter per se.
The characterization *spiritual fluids* is not strictly precise, because in reality they are still, in fact, matter that is quintessentialized to varying degrees. There is nothing truly *spiritual* except the soul or intelligent principle. The spiritual fluids are thus designated as such for comparison because of their special affinity with spirits. One could say that they comprise the matter of the spirit world, which is why they are called *spiritual fluids*.
6. Besides, who knows the innermost composition of tangible matter? Perhaps it is compact only in relation to our senses. This may be demonstrated by the ease with which spiritual fluids and spirits pass right through it. It offers no more of an obstacle to them than what transparent objects offer to light.
Having as its primitive element the ethereal cosmic fluid, tangible matter should be able to return to the state of etherization upon disaggregation, just as the diamond, the hardest substance known, can be volatilized into intangible gas. *The solidification of matter is in reality only a transitory state of the universal fluid, which can return to its primitive state when the conditions needed for cohesion cease*.
Who knows whether in the state of tangibility matter is not susceptible to acquiring a sort of etherization that endows it with particular properties? Certain phenomena that seem to be authentic would tend to support such an idea. For now, however, we only possess the indicators of the invisible world; the future undoubtedly holds for us the knowledge of new laws that will enable us to understand what is still a mystery.

The formation and properties of the perispirit

7. The perispirit, or the fluidic body of spirits, is one of the most important products of the cosmic fluid. It is a condensation of that fluid around a focal point of intelligence or *soul*. We have already seen that the corporeal body also has its origin in this same fluid condensed and transformed into tangible matter. In the perispirit, the molecular transformation operates differently because the fluid retains its imponderability and ethereal qualities. The perispiritual body and the corporeal body thus have their source in the same primitive element; both are matter, although in two different states.
8. Spirits extract their perispirit from the environment in which they find themselves, which means that this envelope is formed from environmental fluids. The result is that the compositional elements of the perispirit must vary according to the different worlds. Since Jupiter is indicated as being a highly evolved world when compared to earth, and is an orb where

corporeal life does not have the materiality of our own, perispiritual envelopes there must be of an infinitely more quintessentialized nature than upon the earth. So, just as we could not exist on that world with our corporeal body, neither could our spirit go there with its earthly perispirit. When the spirit emigrates from the earth, it also leaves behind its fluidic envelope and puts on another that is suited to the world where it is going.

9. The nature of the fluidic envelope always has to do with the spirit's degree of moral advancement. Less evolved spirits cannot change envelopes at will, and, consequently, cannot go from one world to another at will. There are some whose fluidic envelope, even though quite ethereal and imponderable with respect to tangible matter, is still too heavy – if we may so express ourselves – with respect to the spirit world to allow them to leave their environment. In this category one must include those whose perispirit is so dense that they confuse it with their corporeal body, and who, for that reason, believe they are still among the living. These spirits – and there is a great number of them – remain on earth's surface like incarnates, believing they are still minding their earthly concerns. Others, although a little more dematerialized, are not sufficiently so to ascend above the terrestrial realms.[2]

Highly evolved spirits, on the other hand, can go to lower worlds and can even incarnate on them. They draw from the compositional elements of the world they enter the materials to form the fluidic or corporeal envelope that is appropriate to the environment in which they find themselves. They are like great lords who leave their fine clothes in order to don temporarily the garb of serfs, but without ceasing to be great lords because of it.

This is how spirits of the highest order can manifest themselves to earth's inhabitants or incarnate on a mission amongst them. Such spirits do not bring their envelope with them, but rather their remembrance through intuition of the regions whence they have come, and which they see by means of thought. They are seers amongst the blind.

10. The layer of spiritual fluids that surround the earth may be compared to the lower layers of the atmosphere, which are heavier, denser and less pure than the upper layers. These fluids are not homogenous; they are a mixture of molecules of diverse qualities, among which one necessarily finds the elementary molecules that form their base, although altered to various degrees. The effects produced by these fluids will result from the *sum* of the pure parts they contain. Such is, for comparison, alcohol distilled or mixed in different proportions with water or other substances: its specific density increases with this mixture, while at the same time its strength and inflammability decrease even though in the whole there is pure alcohol.

The spirits called to live in this environment draw their perispirits from it; however, *depending on whether the spirit itself is more purified or less so, its perispirit is formed of purer or denser parts of the fluid suitable for the world where it incarnates.* There, the spirit produces – always by

comparison and not by assimilation – the effect of a chemical reaction that attracts to itself the molecules that are in keeping with its nature.
From this a *crucial* fact may be drawn: *the inner composition of the perispirit is not identical among all the incarnate or discarnate spirits that populate the earth or the space surrounding it*. However, the same does not apply to the corporeal body, which, as has been shown, is formed of identical elements, however highly or little evolved the spirit may be. Also, the effects produced by the body are the same for everyone and their needs are the same, whereas everybody is different with respect to their perispirit.
A further result: the perispiritual envelope of the same spirit changes with its progress in each incarnation even if it incarnates in the same environment; in the exceptional case where high order spirits incarnate on missions on a less evolved world, they have a less dense perispirit than the indigenous inhabitants of that world.
11. The environment always has to do with the nature of the beings that must live in it: fish are in the water; land beings, in the air; and spirit beings in the spiritual or ethereal fluid, even on earth. *The ethereal fluid is to the needs of spirits what the atmosphere is to the needs of incarnates.* So, just as fish cannot live in the air and land animals cannot live in an atmosphere too rarified for their lungs, low order spirits cannot bear the radiance and impact of the most ethereal fluids. They would not die while in such fluids, because the spirit does not die, but an instinctive force keeps them away, just as incarnates stay away from a very hot fire or a very bright light. That is why they cannot leave the environment that is suited to their nature. In order to change environments, they must first change their nature. They must rid themselves of the material instincts that keep them in material environments; in other words, they must purify and transform themselves morally. Then, they will gradually identify with a more purified environment, which becomes a need for them, a necessity, like the eyes of someone who has lived in darkness for a long time imperceptibly grow accustomed to the light of day and the brilliance of the sun.
12. Thus, everything in the universe is connected, everything forms a chain; everything is subject to the grand and harmonious law of unity, from the most physically dense to the most spiritually purified. The earth is like a vessel from which a thick smoke escapes: as it rises higher its rarified particles become lost in infinite space.
The divine power shines in every part of this grandiose whole, but in order for God to attest to God’s might in a more impressive way, and not being content with what God has already done, there are some who would have God come and upset such harmony! They would have God stoop to the role of stage magician through childish effects worthy of a sleight-of-hand artist! In addition, there are those who would dare propose Satan himself as God’s rival in skillfulness! Truly, the divine majesty has never been so lowered, and yet we are still astounded at the progress of disbelief!

You are right to say, “Faith is dead,” but it is the faith in anything that shocks common sense and reason that is dead; the faith similar to the kind that used to make people say, “The gods are dead!” However, faith in serious matters, the faith in God and immortality, has always lived in the human heart, and even if it has been suffocated under the childish stories that have overburdened it, it reveals itself all the stronger from the moment it is liberated, like a withered plant rises again as soon as it receives the sun!

Yes, everything in nature is a miracle, because everything is wonderful and bears witness to the divine wisdom! Such miracles are for the whole world, for all who have eyes to see and ears to hear – not for just a few! No! There are no miracles in the meaning that has been connected with the word, because everything derives from the eternal laws of creation and such laws are perfect.

The action of spirits upon the fluids; fluidic creations; thought photography

13. The spiritual fluids, which comprise one of the states of the universal cosmic fluid, are, properly stated, the atmosphere for spirit beings; it is the element from which they draw the matter upon which they operate; it is the environment where special phenomena occur, perceptible to the spirit’s sight and hearing, but beyond the corporeal senses, which are impressed solely by tangible matter. It is where that light which is particular to the spirit world is formed, and which is different from ordinary light through its causes and its effects. Finally, it is the vehicle for thought, like the air is the vehicle for sound.

14. Spirits act upon the spiritual fluids, but they do not manipulate them like humans manipulate gases; instead, they use the help of thought and will. Thought and will are for spirits what hands are to humans. By means of thought they impress upon the fluids this or that direction; they agglomerate, combine or disperse them; they form them in ensembles having a single appearance, shape and certain coloration; they alter their properties as a chemist alters gases or other substances, combining them according to certain laws. It is the great workshop or laboratory of the spirit life.

Sometimes these transformations are the result of intent; frequently, however, they are the product of an unconscious thought. It is enough for a spirit to think about something in order for it to be produced, just as it is enough for the spirit to intone a melody in order for it to resound in the atmosphere.

For example, this is how a spirit makes itself visible to an incarnate endowed with psychic sight, appearing in the same form it had while alive at the time in which it was known, even if it has had many incarnations since then. It presents itself in the same clothing and with the same outward signs – infirmities, scars, amputated limbs, etc. – that it had then. A

beheaded person will appear without a head. This does not mean that it has retained such an appearance – certainly not – for as a spirit it is not lame, maimed, cross-eyed or headless. But going back *in thought* to the time in which it had been this way, its perispirit instantly takes on the appearance, just as it will instantly drop it the moment the thought ceases. Hence, if it had been black at one time and then white at another, it will present itself either as black or white depending on which of the two incarnations for it is being evoked, and to which it goes back in thought.

Through a similar effect, the spirit's thought fluidically creates the objects that it had had the habit of using. A miser will finger gold; a soldier will bear arms and wear a uniform; a smoker will use a pipe; a laborer will have his plow and cattle, and an old woman her distaff[3]. Such fluidic objects are as real to the spirit – who is also fluidic – as they are in the material state to the live individual; however, since they are creations of its thought, their existence is as fleeting as the thought itself.[4]

15. Since the fluids are the vehicle for thought, thought acts upon the fluids as sound acts upon the air; fluids bring thought to us just as the air brings sound. One could truthfully state, therefore, that in these fluids there are waves and rays of thought that crisscross one another without mixing, just as in the air there are sound waves and rays.

There is more: as thought creates *fluidic images,* it is reflected in the perispiritual envelope as in a mirror; there, it takes on a body and *photographs itself* somehow. Suppose that a certain man, for example, gets the idea to kill another. As impassive as his physical body may be, his fluidic body goes into action by means of the thought, which reproduces all the nuances; it fluidically executes the motion, the act that he has the desire to accomplish. The thought creates the image of the victim, and the entire scenario is painted like a picture just as it exists in his mind.

This is how the most secret movements of the soul reverberate in the fluidic envelope; how one soul can read another soul like a book and see what is imperceptible to the body's eyes. However, in seeing the intent, the soul can foresee the fulfillment of the act that will result from it; but it cannot determine the moment when it will be fulfilled, ascertain the details, or even affirm that it will actually occur, since ulterior circumstances may modify the plans and change the dispositions. It cannot see what is not yet in the thought; what it does see is the habitual preoccupation of the individual – his or her desires, plans and good or evil intentions.

Qualities of the fluids

16. The action of spirits upon the spiritual fluids has consequences of crucial and direct importance for incarnates. Since these fluids are the vehicle for thought, which can modify their properties, it is obvious that they must be impregnated with the good or evil qualities of the thoughts that set them in motion, and they change according to the purity or impurity of sentiments. Evil thoughts corrupt the spiritual fluids just as harmful

miasmas corrupt breathable air. The fluids that surround evil spirits, or which are projected by them, are therefore noxious, whereas those that receive the influence of good spirits are as pure as the spirits' degree of moral perfection allows.

17. It would be impossible to draw up an enumeration or classification of good and bad fluids, or to specify their respective characteristics because of the fact that their diversity is as great as is the diversity of thoughts.

The fluids do not possess qualities *sui generis*, but rather acquire them within the environment where they are developed. They are modified by the emanations of that environment like the air is modified by exhalations, and water by the salts of the surfaces it crosses. According to the circumstances, their qualities are, like those of air and water, temporary or permanent, which makes them especially suited to producing these or those particular effects.

The fluids do not have special labels. Like odors, they are designated according to their properties, effects and original type. From a moral point of view, they bear the mark of the sentiments of hate, envy, jealousy, pride, selfishness, violence, hypocrisy, goodness, benevolence, love, charity, tenderness, etc. From the physical point of view, they are exciting, calming, penetrating, acerbic, irritating, soothing, soporific, narcotic, toxic, reparatory, expelling, etc. They become a force for transmission, propulsion, etc. A table of the fluids would thus contain all the passions, virtues and vices of humankind, and all the properties of matter corresponding to the effects they produce.

18. Since humans are incarnate spirits, they have a portion of the attributes of the spirit life, because they live that life as well as the corporeal life, primarily during sleep but often in the waking state as well. Upon incarnating, the spirit retains its perispirit with the qualities proper to it, and the perispirit, as we know, is not circumscribed by the body but radiates all around and envelops it as in a fluidic atmosphere.

Through its intimate union with the body, the perispirit performs an extremely important role in the organism. Through its expansion, it puts the incarnate spirit in a more direct relationship with discarnate spirits and also with other incarnate ones.

The thought of the incarnate spirit acts upon the spiritual fluids in the same way as does the thought of discarnates spirits; it is transmitted from spirit to spirit through the same means, and depending on whether it is good or evil, it cleanses or contaminates the surrounding fluids.

If the ambient fluids are modified by the projection of the thoughts of the spirit, its perispiritual envelope, which is a constituent part of its being, and which directly and permanently receives the impression of its thoughts, must bear the mark of its good or evil qualities even more. Fluids contaminated by emanations from evil spirits can be purified by expelling such spirits, but their perispirit will always be what it is as long as the spirit itself does not change.

Since the perispirit of incarnates is of a nature identical to the spiritual fluids, it assimilates them easily like a sponge soaking up a liquid. These fluids exert an action upon the perispirit all the more direct since, due to its expansion and radiation, the perispirit is mixed together with them.
As the fluids act upon the perispirit, it in turn reacts upon the physical organism, with which it is in molecular contact. If its emanations are good in nature, the body gets a healthy feeling from them; if they are evil, the feeling is painful. If the evil emanations are continuous and fierce, they can cause physical disorders; certain diseases have no other cause.
The environments where evil spirits abound are thus impregnated with harmful fluids, which are absorbed by all the perispirit's pores just as pestilent miasmas are absorbed by the pores of the body.
19. This is what explains the effects that are produced in meeting places. A gathering is a focal point where different thoughts radiate. It is like an orchestra, a choir of thoughts, where each one produces a note. The result is a multitude of fluidic currents and emanations, from which each participant receives an impression through the spiritual sense just as in a musical choir each singer receives the impression of sounds through the hearing sense.
However, just as there are harmonious and discordant sounds, there are also harmonious and discordant thoughts. If the group is harmonious, the impression is pleasant; if it is discordant, the impression is uncomfortable. Moreover, there is no need for thought to be formulated using words; the fluidic radiation exists nonetheless, whether expressed or not.
Such is the cause for the feeling of satisfaction that is experienced in a sympathetic meeting animated by good and benevolent thoughts. There, a healthy moral atmosphere reigns where one may breathe easily; there, one feels comforted because he or she is imbued with healthy fluidic emanations. But if there is a mixture of a few bad thoughts, they produce the effect of a current of icy air in a warm environment or a wrong note in a concerto. This also explains the anxiousness, the indefinable ill-at-ease feeling that may occur in an antipathetic environment, where malevolent thoughts provoke currents of nauseating fluid.
20. Thought thus produces a kind of physical effect that reacts upon one's moral state – something that Spiritism alone can make comprehensible. Persons feel this instinctively, since they look for homogenous or sympathetic meetings where they know they can absorb new moral strength. One could say that in such meetings they recuperate the fluidic losses suffered daily due to the radiation of thought, just as through nourishment they recuperate the losses of the physical body. Actually, thought is an emission that causes a real loss of spiritual fluids, and, consequently, physical fluids, in such a way that persons need to re-strengthen themselves in the emanations they receive from the outside.

When one says that doctors heal their patients with good words, this is an absolute truth, for a benevolent thought brings with it reparatory fluids that act as much upon the physical as the mental state.

21. It is of course possible, one might say, to avoid persons known to be ill-intentioned, but how can we avoid the influence of the evil spirits who swarm around us and intrude everywhere without being seen!

The way to do so is quite simple, because it depends on the will of persons themselves, who bear within them the necessary protection. Fluids are combined due to the similarity of their natures; dissimilar fluids repel one another. There is incompatibility between good and bad fluids, just as there is between water and oil.

What do we do when the air is contaminated? We cleanse it and purify it by destroying the concentration of the miasmas, by expelling the malevolent emanations with stronger currents of healthy air. The invasion of deleterious fluids must therefore be opposed with good fluids, and since we all have in our own perispirit a permanent fluidic source, we have the remedy within us. It takes nothing more than purifying this source and giving it such qualities that it may become a *repellant* of bad influences instead of being an attracting force. The perispirit is therefore armor that must be given the best possible caliber. Thus, because the qualities of the perispirit result from the qualities of the soul, it is necessary to work on improving it, because it is the soul's imperfections that attract evil spirits.

Flies go where concentrations of decay attract them; destroy the concentrations and the flies will disappear. Similarly, evil spirits go where evil attracts them; eliminate the evil and they will stay away. *Truly good spirits, whether incarnate or discarnate, have nothing to fear from the influence of evil ones.*

II. Explanation of certain phenomena reputed to be supernatural

Spirit or psychic sight; second sight; somnambulism; Dreams

22. The perispirit is the link between the corporeal and spirit life. It is through it that the incarnate spirit is in a continuous relationship with discarnate spirits. In sum, it is through the perispirit that special phenomena occur in certain humans. The primary cause of these phenomena is not to be found in tangible matter, and for that reason they might appear to be supernatural.

It is in the properties and radiation of the perispiritual fluids that one must search for the cause of *second sight* or *spirit sight*, which may also be called *psychic sight*, with which many persons are endowed, frequently without their being aware of it, just as occurs with somnambulistic sight.

The perispirit is the spirit's *sensory organ;* through its intermediation the incarnate spirit perceives spirit-related things that are outside the corporeal senses. Through the body's organs, sight, hearing and the various other sensations are localized and limited to the perception of physical things.

Through the spiritual or *psychic* sense they are generalized; that is, the spirit sees, hears and feels in its entire being everything that is within the sphere of its perispiritual fluidic radiation.

In humans, such phenomena are the manifestation of the spirit life; the soul is acting outside the organism. In second sight, or perception through the psychic sense, they do not see through the eyes of the body, although often, out of habit, they direct them toward the point on which they have set their attention. They see through the eyes of the soul, the proof of this being that they see just as well with their eyes closed and they also see beyond the reach of their line of vision. They read the thought portrayed figuratively in the fluidic ray (see no. 15).[5]

23. Although during life the spirit is *held captive* to the body by the perispirit, it is not so enslaved that it cannot stretch its chain and go to a distant point, whether on the earth or in space. The spirit is only reluctantly attached to its body, because its normal life is one of freedom, whereas its corporeal life is that of a serf attached to the glebe. Consequently, the spirit is happy upon leaving its body, like a bird leaving its cage; it seizes every occasion to free itself from it, and hence takes advantage of every instant in which its presence is not needed for its life of relationships. This is the phenomenon designated by the name *emancipation of the soul*; it always occurs during sleep. Every time the body is at rest, when the senses are inactive, the spirit disengages itself. (See *The Spirit's Book*, pt. 2, chap. VIII)

During these moments, the spirit lives the spirit life, whereas the body lives only the vegetative life. It is partly in the state it will be in after death: it travels space and converses with its friends and other spirits who are either discarnate or *incarnate*.

The fluidic tie that holds the spirit to the body is permanently broken only at death, and complete separation occurs only with the absolute extinction of the vital principle's activity. While the body is alive, the spirit, whatever distance away it might be, is instantly called back once its presence is necessary. It then resumes the course of its outward life of relationships. Sometimes, upon waking, it retains a memory of its pilgrimages: a precise or imprecise image, which comprises the dream. In any event, it brings back intuitions that suggest new ideas and thoughts, justifying the proverb: The night brings counsel.

This also explains certain characteristic phenomena such as natural and magnetic somnambulism, catalepsy, lethargy, ecstasy, etc., which are none other than manifestations of the spirit life.[6]

24. Since spirit sight does not operate by means of the eyes of the body, it follows that the perception of things does not occur by means of ordinary light. In fact, material light is made for the material world; for the spirit world there is a special light whose nature is unknown to us, but which is undoubtedly one of the properties of the ethereal fluid impacting the visual perceptions of the soul. Thus, there is material light and spiritual light. The

former has focal points circumscribed in luminous objects, whereas the latter has its focal point everywhere. That is why there are no obstacles to spirit sight; it is limited by neither distance nor opacity of matter; darkness does not exist for it. The spirit world is therefore illuminated by spirit light, which has its own effects, just as the physical world is illuminated by the solar light.

25. Enveloped by its perispirit, the soul thus carries its own luminous principle, and since it penetrates matter due to its ethereal essence, there are no objects opaque to its sight.

Nevertheless, spirit sight entails neither the same extent nor the same penetration in all spirits. Only pure spirits possess spirit sight in all its power. In low order spirits it is weakened by the relative density of the perispirit, which imposes itself like a kind of fog.

Spirit sight manifests to different degrees in incarnate spirits through the phenomenon of second sight, whether in natural or magnetic somnambulism or whether in the waking state. According to the degree of this faculty's power, it is said that its lucidity is greater or lesser. It is with the help of this faculty that certain persons can see inside the human body and describe the causes of illnesses.

26. Spirit sight therefore provides special perceptions that are not centered in the physical organs but rather operate under different conditions than corporeal sight. That is why one cannot expect identical effects from it or experiment with it using the same procedures. Since it occurs outside the organism, it has a mobility that frustrates all predictions. It is necessary to study it as to its effects and causes, and not compare it to ordinary sight, which it is not meant to replace except in exceptional cases that are not to be taken as the general rule.

27. Spirit sight is necessarily incomplete and imperfect in incarnate spirits, and consequently it is subject to aberrations. Since its seat is in the soul itself, the state of the soul must influence the perceptions it provides. According to the degree of its development, the circumstances and the moral state of the individual, spirit sight can provide either during sleep or during the waking state: 1) the perception of certain real physical events, such as knowledge of events that occur far away, details describing a locality, the causes of an illness and appropriate remedies; 2) the perception of things equally real in the spirit world, such as being able to see spirits; 3) fantastic images created by the imagination, analogous to the fluidic creations of thought (see above, no. 14). Such creations always go hand in hand with the moral dispositions of the spirit that creates them. It is thus that the thoughts of persons who are strongly imbued and preoccupied with certain religious beliefs portray hell, its furnaces, its tortures and its demons just as they imagine them to be. Sometimes it is an entire epopee. Pagans saw Olympus and Tartarus just as Christians saw heaven and hell. If upon waking or upon leaving the ecstatic state such individuals retain an exact memory of their visions, they take them as realities and confirmations

of their beliefs, whereas they are nothing more than a product of their own thoughts.[7] Hence, ecstatic visions must be strictly examined before accepting them. Under this aspect, the remedy for excessive credulity is the study of the laws that govern the spirit world.

28. Dreams per se display the three types of visions described above. The first two belong to prophetic dreams, presentiments and warnings.[8] It is in the third, that is, in the fluidic creations of thought, that one can find the cause of certain fantastic images that have nothing real about them as far as the material life is concerned, but which for the spirit have a reality that is sometimes such that the body suffers its repercussion – hair has even turned white under the impression of a dream. Such creations can be provoked by eccentric beliefs, by retrospective memories, by likes, desires, passions, fear or regret, by habitual preoccupations, by bodily needs, or by a breakdown in the functions of the organism; and finally, by other spirits with either a benevolent or malevolent purpose, depending on their nature. [9]

Catalepsy; resurrections

29. Inert matter cannot feel, nor can the perispiritual fluid; however, the latter transmits sensation to the sensory center, which is the spirit. Painful corporeal lesions thus impact the spirit like an electric shock through the intermediation of the perispiritual fluid, for which the nerves seem to be the conducting wires. It is the “nervous influx” of the physiologists, who, unaware of the relationship of this fluid with the spiritual principle, are not able to explain all its effects.

This interruption can take place due to the separation of a limb or the cutting of a nerve, but also, partially or generally, and without any lesion, in the moments of the spirit’s emancipation, great overexcitement or preoccupation. In this state, the spirit no longer thinks of the body, and in its feverish activity it attracts to itself, so to speak, the perispiritual fluid, which, in withdrawing from the surface, produces a momentary numbness there. One could further state that, in certain circumstances, a molecular modification is produced in the perispiritual fluid, and this modification temporarily deprives it of its transmitting ability. That is why many times in the heat of battle a soldier does not notice that he has been wounded; that a person whose attention is concentrated on an endeavor does not hear the noise that is spread all around. It is an analogous effect, but more pronounced, that takes place with certain somnambulists during lethargy or catalepsy. Finally, it is what may explain the insensibility of convulsionaries and certain martyrs (See *Revue Spirite*, Jan. 1868: “Etude sur les Aïssaouas.”).

Paralysis does not have the same cause at all; the effect is totally organic. It results from the fact that the nerves themselves, which are the conducting wires, are no longer suitable for the fluidic circulation – the strings of the instrument have been altered.

30. In certain pathological states when the spirit is no longer in the body and the perispirit adheres to it only at a few points, the body displays all the appearances of death, and it is the absolute truth to say that life is hanging on by only a thread. Such a state may last for a longer or lesser length of time; some parts of the body may even begin decomposing without life having permanently gone out. As long as the last thread has not yet been broken, the spirit can, whether by an energetic action of its *own* will or whether by an *equally powerful outside fluidic influx*, be called back to the body. This can explain certain prolongations of life against all odds, and also certain supposed resurrections. It is like a plant that sometimes sprouts from only a sprig of a root. Nevertheless, when the last molecules of the fluidic body have disengaged from the corporeal body, or when the latter is in an irreparable state of decay, any return to life becomes impossible.[10]

Healings

31. As has been seen, the universal fluid is the primitive element of both the corporeal body and the perispirit, which are merely transformations of it. By its very nature this fluid, condensed in the perispirit, can supply reparatory elements to the body. The driving agent is the incarnate or discarnate spirit that injects a portion of the substance of its fluidic envelope into a deteriorating body. The healing occurs by replacing an *unhealthy* molecule with a *healthy* one. The curative power is thus a direct result of the purity of the injected substance; it also depends on the energy of the will, which causes a more abundant fluidic emission and gives the fluid a greater penetrating power; finally, it depends on the intentions that animate the one who wants to do the healing, *whether a person or a spirit*. The fluids that emanate from an impure source are like adulterated medicinal substances.

32. The effects of the fluidic action upon the ill are extremely varied, depending on the circumstances. This action is sometimes slow and requires a prolonged treatment, as in the case of ordinary magnetism. At other times it is quick like an electric current. There are individuals endowed with a power such that they perform instantaneous healings on the ill simply by laying their hands on them, or even solely through an act of their will. Between the two poles of this faculty there are infinite variations. All healings of this kind are varieties of magnetism and differ only in intensity and speed of action. The principle is always the same: it is the fluid that performs the role of therapeutic agent, and whose effects depend on its quality and the particular circumstances.

33. The magnetic action can be produced in several ways:

1) By the magnetizer's own fluid. This is magnetism per se, or *human magnetism*, whose action depends on the power, and, especially, the quality of the fluid;

2) By the fluid of spirits acting directly and *without intermediary* upon an incarnate, whether to heal or lessen some kind of suffering, whether to bring about spontaneous somnambulistic sleep, or to exert any physical or

mental influence on the individual. This is *spirit magnetism*, whose quality is the direct result of the qualities of the spirit[11];
3) By the fluids that spirits pour out on the magnetizer, who serves as the conductor. This is *mixed or semi-spirit magnetism*, or if preferred, *spirit-human magnetism*. Combined with the human fluid, the spiritual fluid gives it the qualities it lacks. In such circumstances, the participation of spirits is sometimes spontaneous, but more often is brought about at the request of the magnetizer.
34. The faculty of healing via fluidic influence is very common and may be developed through practice; but instantaneous healing through the laying on of hands is rarer and possessing it to the highest degree may be regarded as exceptional. Nonetheless, in many ages and amongst nearly all cultures, individuals appeared who possessed it to a high degree. In these latter times, many noteworthy examples have appeared whose authenticity cannot be contested. Since healings of this kind rest on a natural principle, and since the power to perform them is not a privilege, it follows that they do not operate outside of nature and they are miraculous in appearance only.[12]

Apparitions; transfigurations

35. In its normal state the perispirit is invisible to us, but since it is formed of ethereal matter, the spirit can in certain circumstances and through an act of its will cause it to undergo a molecular modification that renders it momentarily visible. This is how *apparitions* are produced, which, like all other phenomena, do not occur outside the laws of nature. This is no more extraordinary than steam, which is invisible when highly rarefied, but becomes visible when condensed.
Depending on the degree of condensation of the perispiritual fluid, an apparition is sometimes vague and vaporous; at other times it is more clearly defined; and, finally, at other times, it has all the appearances of tangible matter. It can even attain true tangibility to the point that the observer is fooled as to the nature of the being in front of him or her.
Vaporous apparitions are common and occur frequently when individuals present themselves in such manner to their loved ones after having died. Tangible apparitions are rarer, although there have been numerous perfectly authenticated cases of them. If a spirit wants to make itself known, it gives its envelope all the outward markings that it had while living.[13]
36. It should be noted that tangible apparitions have only the appearances of corporeal matter – they could not possess its qualities. Due to their fluidic nature, they cannot have the same cohesion as matter, because, in reality, they are not made of flesh. They form instantly and disappear the same way, or they evaporate through the disaggregation of their fluidic molecules. The beings that appear under such conditions are not born, nor do they die like human beings. They are seen and no longer seen, without the observer

knowing where they have come from, how they have come or where they are going. No one could kill, shackle or imprison them, since they have no corporeal body; trying to hit them would result in striking a vacuum.
Such is the nature of *agenerates,* with whom one may communicate without suspecting what they are, but who do not stay very long and cannot partake in the habitual sharing of food at homes nor be counted among the members of a family.
Moreover, in their entire person, in their steps, there is something strange and unusual that derives from their materiality and spirituality. Their gaze, vaporous and penetrating at the same time, does not have the clarity of the gaze through corporeal eyes. Their speech is brief and almost always terse, possessing nothing of the luster or volubility of human speech. Their proximity makes one feel an odd, indefinable sensation of unease that inspires a sort of fear, and taken as individuals like all others, one may say unintentionally, “Now that is a peculiar person.”[14]
37. Since the perispirit is the same both in incarnates and discarnates by means of a completely identical effect, an incarnate spirit can, during a moment of freedom, appear in a place different than where its body is lying, and display its customary mannerisms and all the marks of its identity. This phenomenon, of which there are many authenticated examples, has given rise to the belief in human doubles.[15]
38. One particular effect of this type of phenomena is that vaporous and even tangible apparitions are not perceptible to everyone indiscriminately. Spirits show themselves only when they want and to whom they want. Thus, a spirit could appear to a group or to one or more of those present without being seen by the others. This happens because these types of perceptions occur by means of spirit sight and not physical sight, because not only is spirit sight not given to all persons, but it can be taken away by an act of the spirit’s will from whoever it does not wish to show itself, just as it can give it temporarily if it deems it necessary.
The condensation of the perispiritual fluid in apparitions, even to the point of tangibility, lacks the properties of ordinary matter; otherwise, apparitions would be perceptible to the eyes of the body and then everyone present would see them.[16]
39. Since the spirit can perform transformations within the contours of its perispiritual envelope, and since this envelope radiates all around the body like a fluidic atmosphere, a phenomenon similar to an apparition can be produced on the surface of the body itself. Under the fluidic layer, the real image of the body can be erased more completely or less so and take on other traits; or the original traits seen through the modified fluidic layer – as through a prism – can take on a different expression. If, while setting aside the everyday world, the incarnate spirit identifies itself with things of the spirit world, the semblance of a homely face can become beautiful, radiant and at times even luminous. On the other hand, if the spirit is

enticed by evil passions, an attractive face can take on a horrendous appearance.
This is what happens during *transfigurations*, which are always a reflection of the predominant qualities and sentiments of the spirit. This phenomenon is therefore the result of a fluidic transformation. It is a type of perispiritual apparition that may even be produced upon a living body, and sometimes at the moment of death instead of at a distance, as in apparitions per se. What distinguishes the apparitions of this kind is that they are usually perceptible to everybody watching and by the physical eyes, precisely because they are based on visible corporeal matter, whereas in purely fluidic apparitions, there is no tangible matter.[17]

Physical manifestations; mediumship

40. The phenomena of turning and talking tables, the suspension of heavy objects in the air and mediumistic writing are as ancient as the world itself; more common nowadays, they provide the key to some of the spontaneous, similar phenomena to which, due to ignorance about the law that governs them, have been attributed a supernatural and miraculous character. Such phenomena rest on the properties of the perispiritual fluid of either incarnate or discarnate spirits.
41. It is with the help of its perispirit that the spirit acts upon its living body; furthermore, it is with this same fluid that it can manifest itself by acting upon inert matter, which produces noises and the movement of tables and other objects that it lifts, drops or carries. These phenomena contain nothing surprising considering that among us the most powerful motors may be found in the most rarified and even imponderable fluids such as air, steam and electricity.
It is also with the help of its perispirit that the spirit enables mediums to write, speak or draw. Since it no longer has a tangible body for acting ostensibly whenever it wants to manifest, it borrows the organs of the medium's body, which, by means of the fluidic emanation that it pours out on it, makes act as if it were its own body.
42. It is by the same means that the spirit acts upon a table, whether to make it move without any predetermined meaning, or whether to make it produce intelligent raps by indicating letters of the alphabet in order to form words and sentences – a phenomenon known as *typtology*. The table is merely an instrument the spirit utilizes, as someone would utilize a pencil to write with. The spirit endows it with a momentary vitality by means of the fluid it injects into it; however, *it does not become identified with it*. Persons who, in their emotion upon seeing a loved one manifest, embrace the table perform a foolish act, because it is as if they were embracing the stick that a friend uses to strike. The same applies to those who talk directly to the table as if the spirit were contained within the wood or as if the wood had become the spirit.

When communications occur in this way, we must realize that the spirit is not within the table but to the side *just as it would be if it were alive,* and just as it would be seen if at that moment it could make itself visible. The same applies to written communications: the spirit could be seen beside the medium, guiding the hand or transmitting its thought by means of a fluidic current.

43. When the table leaves the floor and floats in the air without any point of support, the spirit does not lift it with its arms. It envelops it and injects it with a kind of fluidic atmosphere that neutralizes the effect of gravity, as the air does with balloons and kites. The fluid with which the table is injected momentarily gives it greater specific lightness. When it remains stuck to the floor, it is in a state like that of the pneumatic bell jar that has had a vacuum created inside it. These are only comparisons for us to show a similarity of effects and not an absolute similarity of causes. (See *The Mediums' Book*, pt. 2, chap. IV)

Consequently, one should understand that it is no more difficult for a spirit to lift a person than for it to lift a table, to carry an object from one place to another, or to throw it somewhere – all these phenomena are produced by the same law.[18]

When the table chases someone, it is not the spirit who is running, because it can remain peacefully in the same spot; it gives impulse to the table by means of a fluidic current with the help of its will.

When raps are heard within tables or elsewhere, the spirit is not striking it with its hand or some other object. It directs a stream of fluid to the point where the noise comes from and this produces the effects of an electric jolt. The spirit can change the sound just as one can modify the sounds produced by the air.[19]

44. A highly frequent phenomenon in mediumship is the ability of certain mediums to write in a language unknown to them or to address subjects orally or by writing that are beyond the reach of their education. It is not rare to see those who write correctly without ever having learned how to write; others who compose poems without ever having learned how to compose a verse; others who draw, paint, sculpt, compose music or play an instrument without knowing design, painting, sculpting or the art of music. It often happens that writing mediums reproduce flawlessly the handwriting and signature that the spirits who communicate through them used while alive, even though such mediums had not known them.

This phenomenon is no more extraordinary than that of seeing children write by guiding their hand: one can make them write what one wants. Anyone can be made to write in any language by dictating the words to him or her letter by letter. One can understand how the same would apply to mediumship if one recalls the way in which spirits communicate with mediums, who are actually for them no more than passive instruments. If mediums possess the mechanism, if they have overcome the practical difficulties, if they are familiar with the various terms, and if, finally, they

have in their brain the elements of whatever it is that the spirit wants them to execute, they are in the situation of someone who knows how to read and write correctly. The work is easier and quicker; the spirit only has to transmit the thought that its interpreter reproduces through the means at hand.

The aptitude of mediums for things foreign to them is also frequently connected with the knowledge they possessed in another existence, and of which their spirit has retained an intuition. For example, if they were poets or musicians it will be easier to assimilate the poetic or musical thought that a spirit wants them to reproduce. Languages unknown today could have been known in another existence: hence a greater aptitude for writing mediumistically in that language.[20]

Obsession and possession

45. Evil spirits swarm all around the earth as a result of the moral backwardness of its inhabitants. The malevolent action of such spirits makes up part of the calamities to which humankind is exposed on this world. Obsession, which is one of the effects of this action – like infirmities and all the other tribulations of life – should therefore be regarded as a trial or an expiation and accepted as such.

Obsession is the persistent action that an evil spirit exerts upon a particular individual. It presents highly diverse characteristics, from a simple mental influence without perceivable outward signs to the complete disruption of the organism and the mental faculties. It obliterates all mediumistic faculties. In auditory and psychographic mediumship, it results from the obstinacy of a spirit manifesting itself to the exclusion of all others.

46. Just as infirmities are the result of physical imperfections that render the body accessible to pernicious outside influences, obsession is always the result of a moral imperfection that allows entry to an evil spirit. A physical cause may be opposed by a physical force; a moral cause must be opposed by a moral force. In order to protect oneself from infirmities one must strengthen the body; to guard oneself against obsession, one must strengthen the soul; thus the need of those who are the object of an obsession to work on their self-improvement, which is often enough to rid themselves of an obsessor without the help of outside persons. Such help becomes necessary when the obsession degenerates into subjugation and possession, because then the patient sometimes loses his or her will and free will.

Obsession is nearly always an expression of vengeance taken by a spirit; it most frequently has its source in the relationships between the obsessed and obsessor in a previous life.

In cases of severe obsession, the obsessed is as if enveloped and impregnated with a pernicious fluid that neutralizes the action of healthy fluids and repels them. It is this fluid from which the obsessed must be disencumbered. Now, an evil fluid cannot be repelled by an evil fluid. By

means of an action identical to that of a healing medium in cases of illness, *it is necessary to expel the evil fluid with the aid of a better one.*

This is the mechanical action, but it is not always enough; above all, it is also necessary to *act upon the intelligent being*, with whom one must have the right to *speak with authority*, and such authority is not given except by moral ascendancy; the greater the ascendancy the greater the authority.

However, that is not all. In order to assure deliverance, it is necessary to lead the perverse spirit to renounce its evil designs. It is necessary to awaken in it repentance and the desire of the good, together with the aid of skillfully guided instructions through particular evocations aimed at its moral education. One can then have the sweet satisfaction of having freed an incarnate and having converted an imperfect spirit.

The task becomes easier when the obsessed understand their situation and bring the concourse of their will and prayer. Such is not the case when the obsessed, seduced by the deceiving spirit, are deluded as to the qualities of their obsessor and take pleasure in the error in which they are immersed, because then, far from being of any help, they reject all assistance. This is a case of fascination, which is always infinitely more troublesome than the most violent subjugation. (See *The Mediums' Book*, pt. 2, chap. XXIII)

In all cases of obsession, prayer is the most powerful help in acting against an obsessor spirit.

47. In obsession, the spirit acts outwardly with the help of its perispirit, which becomes identified with that of the incarnate. The latter then finds him or herself entwined in a mesh and constrained to act against his or her will.

In possession, instead of acting outwardly, the possessor spirit replaces – so to speak – the incarnate one. It chooses to make his or her body its home, but without the possessed person abandoning it for good, since such can happen only at death. Consequently, possession is always temporary and intermittent, because a discarnate spirit cannot permanently take the place of an incarnate one, since the molecular union of the perispirit and the body can occur only at the time of conception. (See chap. XI, no. 18)

Temporarily possessing the incarnate's body, the spirit uses it as though it were its own: it speaks through its mouth, sees through its eyes and acts with its arms just as it would when alive. This is not the same as in the case of speaking mediumship, where the incarnate spirit speaks by transmitting the thought of a discarnate spirit. In this case, it is the discarnate spirit who speaks and acts, and if one knew it when it was alive, one would recognize it by its language, its voice, its gestures and even its facial expressions.

48. Obsession is always the act of a malevolent spirit. Possession can be the act of a good spirit who comes to speak, and in order to make a greater impression on its listeners, *borrows* the body of an incarnate who loans it voluntarily to it just as if he or she were lending his or her garments. This occurs without any disturbance or discomfort, and during this time the

incarnate spirit finds itself at liberty, as during the state of emancipation; but more often it stands beside its replacement in order to listen to it.

When the possessor spirit is evil, things are otherwise. It does not borrow the body; it seizes it if its owner does not have the *moral power to resist*. It does so through a nasty action toward the incarnate, whom it tortures and torments in all sorts of ways, even so far as to murder him or her either by strangulation or by throwing him or her into the fire or other dangerous places. It makes use of the organs and limbs of the unfortunate patient; it blasphemes, insults and mistreats those who are nearby; it hands its victim over to eccentricities and acts that display all the characteristics of raging insanity.

Occurrences of this type, in different degrees of intensity, are quite numerous, and many cases of insanity have no other cause. Frequently, they are accompanied by pathological disorders that are merely consequential, and against which medical treatments are powerless as long as the originating cause persists. By making known this source of a part of human miseries, Spiritism indicates the means to remedy it: the way is to act upon the author of the evil, who, as an intelligent being, must be treated by the intelligence.[21]

49. Obsession and possession most frequently involve individuals, but at times they are epidemic. Whenever a cloud of evil spirits descends upon a locality, it is as if a troop of enemy forces has come to invade it. In this case, the number of affected individuals may be considerable.[22]

[1] The label psychic phenomenon more precisely expresses this thought than does the label spirit phenomenon, keeping in mind that such phenomena rest upon the properties and attributes of the soul, or rather, the perispiritual fluids, which are inseparable from the soul. This qualification connects them more closely with the order of natural phenomena governed by laws; thus, they may be accepted as psychic effects without being accepted under the label miracles. – Auth.

[2] Examples of spirits who think they are still in this world: Revue Spirite, Dec. 1859, p 310; Nov. 1864, p. 339; Apr. 1865, p. 117 – Auth.

[3] The staff on which wool or flax is wound before spinning. (Webster's, op. cit.) – Tr.

[4] See Revue Spirite, June 1859, p. 184; The Spirits' Book, pt. 2, chap. VIII – Auth.

[5] Occurrences of second sight and somnambulistic lucidity are reported in Revue Spirite, Jan. 1858, p. 25; Nov. 1858, p. 213; July 1861, p. 197; Nov. 1865, p. 352 – Auth.

[6] Examples of lethargy and catalepsy: Revue Spirite: "Madame Schwabenhaus," Sept. 1858, p. 255; "La jeune cataleptique de Souabe," Jan. 1866, p. 18. – Auth.

[7] This explains the visions of Sister Elmerich, who, alluding to the time of Christ's death, said she had seen material things that in fact have never existed except in the books she had read; those of Mme Cantanille (Revue Spirite, Aug. 1866, p. 240); and some of those of Swedenborg – Auth.

[8] See below, chap. XVI, "Theory of prescience," nos. 1-3. – Auth.

[9] See Revue Spirite, June 1866, p. 172; Sept. 1866, p. 284; The Spirits' Book, pt. 2, chap VIII, no. 400 – Auth.

[10] Examples: Revue Spirite, "Le docteur Cardon," Aug. 1863, p. 251; "La femme corse," May 1866, p. 134 – Auth.

[11] Examples: Revue Spirite, Feb. 1863, p. 64; Apr. 1865, p. 113; Sept. 1865, p. 264 – Auth.

[12] Examples of instantaneous healings reported in Revue Spirite: "Le prince de Hohenlohe," Dec. 1866, p. 368; "Jacob," Oct. and Nov. 1866, pp. 312 and 345; Oct. and Nov. 1867, pp. 306 and 339; "Simonet," Aug. 1867, p. 232; "Caïd Hassa," Oct. 1867, p. 303; "Le curé Gassner," Nov. 1867, p. 331 – Auth.

[13] See The Mediums' Book, pt. 2, chaps. VI and VII – Auth.

[14] Examples of vaporous or tangible apparitions and agenerates: Revue Spirite, Jan. 1858, p. 24; Oct. 1858, p. 291; Feb. 1859, p. 38; Mar. 1859, p. 80; Jan 1859, p. 11; Nov. 1859, p. 303; Aug. 1859, p. 210; Apr. 1860, p. 117; May 1860, p. 150; July 1861, p. 199; Apr. 1866, p. 120; "Le laboureur Martin, présenté à Louis XVIII, complete details," Dec. 1866, p. 353. – Auth.
[15] Examples of apparitions of living persons: Revue Spirite, Dec. 1858, pp. 329 and 331; Feb. 1859, p. 41; Aug. 1859, p. 197; Nov. 1860, p. 356 – Auth.
[16] One must accept only with extreme reserve the tales of purely individual apparitions, which, in certain cases could be the effect of an overly excited imagination, and at times an invention with ulterior motives. Hence, one must scrupulously take into account the circumstances and the trustworthiness of the person, as well as any interest he or she may have in abusing the credulity of overly trusting individuals. – Auth.
[17] Example and theory of transfiguration: Revue Spirite, Mar. 1859, p. 62 (see also The Mediums' Book, pt. 2, chap. VII) – Auth.
[18] Such is the principle of the phenomenon of apportations, a phenomenon that is quite real, but which should not be accepted except with extreme reservation, because it is one of those phenomena that lend themselves most easily to imitation and fraud. The undeniable honesty of the person who obtains them, his or her absolute material and moral disinterestedness, and the interplay of accompanying circumstances must be taken into consideration. It is especially necessary to distrust the excessive ease with which such effects are produced, and to be wary of those who recur too frequently and, so to speak, at will. Sleight-of-hand artists can do the most extraordinary things. The levitating of a person is a no less provable phenomenon, but much rarer, perhaps because it is more difficult to imitate. It is well known that Mr. Home levitated himself more than once up to the ceiling and then came down again. They say that St. Cupertin possessed the same ability, which is no more miraculous for one than the other. – Auth.
[19] Examples of physical manifestations and disturbances caused by spirits: Revue Spirite, "Jeune fille des Panoramas," Jan. 1858, p. 13; "Mademoiselle Clairon," Feb. 1858, p. 44; "Esprit frappeur de Bergzabern" (complete script), May, June and Jul. 1858, pp. 125, 153 and 184; "Dibbelsdorf", Aug. 1858, p. 219; "Boulanger de Dieppe," Mar. 1860, p. 76; "Marchand de Saint-Pétersbourg," Apr. 1860, p. 115; "Rue des Noyers," Aug. 1860, p. 236; "Esprit frappeur de l'Aube," Jan. 1861, p. 23; "Id. au seizième siècle, "Jan. 1864, p. 32; "Poitiers," May 1864, p. 156 and May 1865, p. 134; "Soeur Marie," June 1864, p. 185; "Marseille," Apr. 1865, p. 121; "Fives," Aug. 1865, p. 225; "Les rats d'Equihem," Feb. 1866, p. 55 – Auth.
[20] The aptitude that certain individuals display for languages they know – so to speak – without having learned them has no other cause than an intuitive memory of the language they knew in another existence. The example of the poet Méry, reported in Revue Spirite of Nov. 1864, p. 328, is evidence of this. It is obvious that if Mr. Méry had been a medium in his childhood, he would have written in Latin as easily as in French, and would have been proclaimed a prodigy. – Auth.
[21] Examples of healing obsessions and possessions: Revue Spirite, Dec. 1863, p. 373; Jan. 1864, p. 11; June 1864, p. 168; Jan. 1865, p. 5; June 1865, p. 172; Feb. 1866, p. 38; June 1867, p. 174 – Auth.
[22] It was an epidemic of this kind that attacked the village of Morzine, in Savoy a few years ago (see the full report in the Revue Spirite, Dec. 1862, p. 353; Jan., Feb., Apr. and May 1863, pp. 1, 33, 101 and 133) – Auth.

CHAPTER XV

Miracles in the Gospel

The superiority of Jesus' nature • Dreams • The star of the Magi • Second sight • Healings • Possessions • Resurrections • Jesus walks on water • The transfiguration • Jesus calms the storm • The wedding at Cana • The multiplication of the loaves • The temptation of Jesus • Wonders surrounding the death of Jesus • The apparition of Jesus after his death • The disappearance of Jesus' body

The superiority of Jesus' nature

1. The phenomena reported in the Gospel, and which until now have been considered miraculous, belong in their majority to the order of *psychic phenomena;* that is, those that have the faculties and attributes of the soul as their primary cause. In comparing them to those that were described and explained in the preceding chapter, one will have no difficulty in realizing that between the two groups there is an identity of cause and effect. History has shown that similar phenomena have occurred in all times and among all cultures, the reason being that since there are incarnate and discarnate souls, the same effects must have been produced. It is true that one might contest the trustworthiness of history on this point; however, today the phenomena are being produced right before our eyes, and, we might add, naturally and by individuals who have nothing exceptional about them. The very fact that a phenomenon can be reproduced under identical conditions is sufficient to prove that it is possible and that it is subject to a particular law; thus, from that point on, it is no longer miraculous.

As we have seen, the principle of psychic phenomena rests upon the properties of the perispiritual fluid, which constitutes the magnetic agent; upon the manifestations of the spirit life during incarnation and after death; and, finally, upon the compositional state of spirits and their role as an active force of nature. Once these elements are known and their effects proven, one must consequently accept the possibility of certain phenomena that were rejected as long as they were attributed to a supernatural origin.

2. Without any preconceptions as to the nature of Christ – which is beyond the scope of this investigative work – and considering him, hypothetically, only as a highly evolved spirit, we must nonetheless recognize him as one of the highest order, and that, due to his virtues, he is placed far above earthly humanity. Because of the immense results that it produced, his incarnation on this world could only have been one of those missions that are entrusted to the direct messengers of the Divinity in order to fulfill its designs. Even supposing that Christ was not God per se, but a messenger from God sent to transmit God's word, he would be more than a prophet, for he would be a divine messiah.

As a man, he had the bodily composition of corporeal beings; but as a pure spirit detached from matter, he would have lived the spirit life more than

the corporeal life, the weaknesses of which he would not have had. *The superiority of Jesus over other humans was not linked to the particularities of his body, but to those of his spirit, which dominated matter completely, and that of his perispirit, which was drawn from the most quintessential portion of earth's fluids* (see chap. XIV, no. 9). His soul must not have been connected to his body except by strictly indispensable ties, and since it was constantly detached, it must have given him a *second sight* that was not only continuous but exceptionally penetrating and far superior to anything seen among ordinary human beings. Such must have also been the case regarding all the phenomena that depend on the perispiritual or psychic fluids. The quality of these fluids endowed him with an immense magnetic power seconded by his incessant desire to do good.

Did he act as a *medium* in the healings he performed? Could he be considered as a powerful healing medium? No, because a medium is an intermediary, an instrument that discarnate spirits use. Christ, however, had no need of assistance; he was the one who assisted others. Therefore, he acted by himself in virtue of his own personal power, just as incarnates can do in certain cases and according to the measure of their abilities. Moreover, what other spirit would have dared to insufflate him with its own thoughts and charge him with transmitting them? If he did receive an outside influx, it could only have been from God. According to the definition given by one spirit, Christ was *God's medium.*

Dreams

3. *The Gospel states that Joseph was warned by an angel who appeared to him in a dream and told him to flee to Egypt with the child (Mt. 2:19-23).*

Warnings through dreams play a major role in the sacred writings of all religions. Without guaranteeing the preciseness of all the facts recorded, and without discussing them, the phenomenon itself has nothing abnormal about it if one knows that the time of sleep is when the spirit disengages itself from the bonds of matter and momentarily re-enters the spirit life, where it finds itself amongst those whom it used to know. It is often at such times that protector spirits choose to manifest themselves to their wards and give them more direct counsels. The authenticated examples of warnings through dreams are numerous, but one must not infer from this that all dreams are warnings, and even less that everything seen in a dream has some special meaning. The art of interpreting dreams should be ranked among the superstitious and absurd beliefs. (See chap. XIV, nos. 27 and 28)

The star of the Magi

4. *It is said that a star appeared to the magi who came to worship Jesus, that it had gone before them pointing the way and that it stopped when they arrived (Mt. 2:1-12).*

Since there is no means of verification, the issue does not involve knowing whether the event narrated by Matthew is real or if it is only an image indicating that the magi were guided in a mysterious way to the place where the child was; rather, it involves knowing if an event of this nature is actually possible.

What is certain is that in this instance the light could not have been a star. Such could have been believed at the time because it was thought that the stars were luminous points attached to the firmament and that they could fall to earth; but nowadays we know their true nature.
Even though the event did not have the cause attributed to it, the occurrence of the apparition of light that looked like a star is nonetheless something possible. A spirit can appear in a luminous form or can transform part of its perispiritual fluid into a luminous point. Many recent and perfectly authenticated occurrences of this kind have no other cause, and such cause has nothing supernatural about it. (See chap. XIV, nos. 13 ff.)

Second sight

The entry of Jesus into Jerusalem

5. *When they had come close to Jerusalem and had arrived in Bethany, near the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two of his disciples ahead, and he said to them, "Go to the village ahead of you, and arriving there you will find a donkey tied up and her foal with her. Untie her and bring them to me. If anyone says anything to you, tell him that the Lord has need of them, and he will immediately allow you to take them." Now, all of this took place so that this word of the prophet could be fulfilled: "Say to the daughter of Zion: Behold your king, who comes to you full of tenderness, mounted on a donkey, and upon a foal of her that is under the yoke."(Zach. 9: 9,10)*
The disciples then went and did what Jesus had ordered. And having brought the donkey and her foal, they covered them with their garments and had him mount them.(Mt. 21:1-7)[1]

Judas' kiss

6. *Rise, let us go, for he who must betray me is at hand." He had no sooner finished these words, when Judas, one of the twelve, arrived, and with him a troop of men armed with swords and clubs, and who had been sent by the chief priests and the elders of the people. Now, he who would betray him had given them a signal in order to recognize him, saying to them, "The one whom I kiss, he is the one you seek; seize him." Then he quickly approached Jesus and said to him, "Master, I greet you," and he kissed him. Jesus answered him, "My friend, what have you come here to do?" At that moment, all the others came forward, seized Jesus and arrested him. (Mt. 26:46-50)*

Miraculous fishing

7. *One day when Jesus was on the bank of Lake Gennesaret, finding himself pressed by the crowd of people huddled together to hear the word of God, he saw two boats moored at the edge of the lake; the fishermen had gotten out of them and were washing their nets. He then got into one of the boats, which was Simon's, and asked him to put out a little ways from the land. And having sat down, he taught the people from atop the boat.*
When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, "Go out into deep water and cast your nets in order to fish." Simon answered, "Master, we have worked all night without catching anything, but because you say so I will cast the net." Having cast it, they caught such a large quantity of fish that the net tore. They waved to their companions in the other boat to come and help them. They came and filled up their boats so much that they nearly began to sink. (Lk: 5:1-7)

The calling of Peter, Andrew, James, John and Matthew

8. *Now, Jesus was walking along the shore of the Sea of Galilee and saw two brothers – Simon, called Peter, and Andrew, his brother – who were casting their nets into the sea, for they were fishermen. And he said to them, "Follow me and I will make you fishers of men." They immediately left their nets and followed him.*
Continuing on from there, he saw two more brothers – James, son of Zebedee, and John, his brother – who were in a boat with Zebedee, their father, mending their nets, and he called to them. They immediately left their nets and father and followed him. (Mt. 4:18-22)
Upon leaving there, Jesus saw a man, who was called Matthew, seated in the tax collectors office, and said to him, "Follow me," and he immediately rose and followed him. (Mt. 4:9)

9. These events contain nothing surprising when one knows about the power of second sight and the very natural cause behind this faculty. Jesus

possessed it to a high degree, and one could say that it was his normal state, to which a large number of acts during his life attest, and which today have been explained by magnetic phenomena and Spiritism.
The fishing incident, regarded as miraculous, may also be explained by second sight. Jesus did not spontaneously produce fish where there were none; rather, he saw, as could someone lucidly alert, by means of soul sight, the place where the fish were and could confidently tell the fishermen to cast their nets there.
Perception of thought and, consequently, certain predictions, are the result of spirit sight. When Jesus called Peter, Andrew, James, John and Matthew, he would have to have known their inner dispositions in order to know that they would follow him and that they were capable of carrying out the mission that he would entrust to them. It would be necessary for them too to have had an intuition about such mission in order to hand themselves over to him. The same occurred on the day of the Last Supper, when he stated that one of the twelve would betray him, and pointed him out by saying that it would be the one who put his hand into the dish; and also when he said that Peter would deny him.
In many passages in the Gospel it says: “But Jesus, knowing their thought, said to them…” Now, how could he know their thought if it were not by means of the fluidic radiation of those thoughts and at the same time by means of the spirit sight that enabled him to read individuals’ innermost dispositions?
Thus, quite often, when we believe that a thought is deeply hidden in the folds of our soul, we do not suspect that we carry within us a mirror that reflects it, a revelator in its own fluidic radiation impregnated by it. If we were to see the mechanism of the invisible world that surrounds us, the diffusion of the conductor wires of thought that connect all corporeal and incorporeal intelligent beings, the fluidic emanations charged with imprints of the mental world and which, like aerial currents, crisscross space, we would be less surprised by certain effects that ignorance has attributed to chance. (See chap. XIV, nos. 15, 22 ff.)

Healings

The loss of blood

10. *Then, a woman who had been afflicted with a loss of blood for twelve years, who had suffered much at the hands of several physicians, and who, having spent all her assets without having received any relief but had only gotten worse, having heard about Jesus, came up from behind the crowd and touched his garments, for she said to herself, “If I could only touch his garments, I would be healed.” At that instant, the source of the blood she was losing dried up and she felt within her body that she was healed of the illness.*
At the same instant, Jesus felt that power had gone out of him, and he turned to the crowd and asked, “Who touched my garments?” His disciples said to him, “You can see that the crowd is pressing in on you from all sides and you ask who touched you?” But he was looking all around to see who had touched him.
However, the woman, who knew what had happened to her, trembled with fear and came to throw herself at his feet and told him the whole truth. Jesus said to her, “My daughter, your faith has saved you; go in peace and be healed of your illness.” (Mk. 5:25-34)

11. Those words, *“feeling that power had gone out of him”* are significant. They express the fluidic movement that had gone from Jesus to the infirm woman. Both felt the action that had just been produced. It is noteworthy that the effect was not caused by any act of Jesus’ own will; neither magnetization nor laying on of hands had occurred. A normal fluidic radiation was enough to work the healing.

But why was that radiation directed toward this woman rather than toward the others, since Jesus was not thinking about her and since he was surrounded by the crowd?

The reason is quite simple. Given as therapeutic matter, the fluid must reach the organic disorder in order to repair it. It can be directed toward the illness by the healer’s will or it can be attracted by the ardent desire, the trust – in other words, the faith – of the ill person. With respect to the fluidic current, the former acts like a force pump, whereas the latter acts like a suction pump. Sometimes, it is necessary for both actions to occur simultaneously, while at other times one is enough. The latter is what took place in this situation.

Jesus was right in saying, “Your faith has saved you.” One should understand that faith here is not some mystical virtue as certain people understand it, but a truly *attracting power;* those who do not possess it oppose the fluidic current with a repelling force, or at least the force of inertia, which paralyzes the action. From this, one can understand that, of two individuals suffering from the same infirmity, when in the presence of a healer, one may be healed but not the other. This is one of the most important principles of healing mediumship and it uses a very natural cause to explain certain apparent anomalies. (See chap. XIV, nos. 31-33)

The blind man of Bethsaida

12. *Having reached Bethsaida, they brought him a blind man who asked him to touch him.*

Taking the blind man by the hand, he led him outside of the village. He put saliva on his eyes, and laying his hands on him, asked him if he could see anything. The man looked around and said to him, “I see men walking around that look to me like trees.” Jesus placed his hands upon the man’s eyes once more and he began to see better. Finally, he was healed in such a way that he saw everything distinctly.

Then, Jesus sent him home, saying to him, “Go home; and if you enter the village do not tell anyone what has happened to you.” (Mk. 8:22-26)

13. Here, the magnetic effect is obvious. The healing was not instantaneous but gradual, the result of a firm and repeated action, although more rapid than in ordinary magnetism. The first sensation of the man was precisely what blind persons experience when they recover their sight. Because of an optical effect, objects seem to have an exaggerated size.

The paralytic

14. *Having gotten into a boat, Jesus crossed the lake and came to his own town (Capernaum). And when he was presented with a paralytic lying on a cot, Jesus, seeing their faith, said to the paralytic, “My son, take heart; your sins are forgiven.”*

Immediately, some of the scribes said to one another, “This man blasphemes.” But Jesus, knowing what they were thinking, asked them, “Why do you harbor evil thoughts in your hearts? Which is easier to say: Your sins are forgiven, or to say: Get up and walk? Now, so that you may know that the

Son of Man has the power to forgive sins on earth, Get up" – he said to the paralytic – "take your cot and go home."
The paralytic immediately got up and went home. And upon seeing the miracle, the people were filled with fear and gave glory to God for having given such power to men. (Mt. 9:1-8)

15. What could be the meaning of these words: *"Your sins are forgiven,"* and in what way could they be used for healing? Spiritism provides the key to this, just as it does to an infinite number of other words misunderstood until now. By means of the law of the plurality of existences, it teaches us that the ills and afflictions of life are often expiations of the past and that we suffer in the present life the consequences of wrongs we committed in a previous one – the different lives being in solidarity with one another until we have paid the debt for their imperfections.

Therefore, if the infirmity of this man was a punishment for the evil he might have committed, by saying to him, "Your sins are forgiven," Jesus was saying to him, "You have paid your debt; the cause of your infirmity is erased by your present faith. Consequently, you deserve to be free of your infirmity." That is why he said to the scribes, "*Which is easier to say: Your sins are forgiven, or to say: Get up and walk?*" Once the cause ceases, the effect must cease. The case is the same as for a prisoner to whom one has come to say, "Your crime has been expiated and pardoned," which would be the same as saying, "You can leave prison."

The ten lepers

16. *One day, as he was going toward Jerusalem, he passed by the outskirts of Samaria and Galilee. And as he was about to enter a village, ten lepers came before him; and keeping their distance, they raised their voices, saying to him "Jesus, our Lord, have mercy on us." When he saw them, Jesus said to them, "Go show yourselves to the priests." And as they were going, they were healed.*
Seeing that he was healed, one of them retraced his steps, praising God in a loud voice. And he came and threw himself at Jesus' feet with his face pressed to the ground, giving thanks to him; and this one was a Samaritan.
Jesus then asked him, "Were not all ten healed? Where, then, are the other nine? None have returned to give glory to God except this foreigner." And he said to him, "Get up, go; your faith has saved you." (Lk. 17:11-19)

17. The Samaritans were schismatics – more or less like Protestants with respect to Catholics – and despised by the Jews as heretics. By indiscriminately healing Samaritans and Jews, Jesus was giving both a lesson on tolerance and an example of it; and by emphasizing the fact that only the Samaritan had returned to give glory to God, he was showing that he had more real faith and recognition than those who regarded themselves as orthodox. By adding, "Your faith has saved you," he was showing that God looks into the depths of the heart and not at the outward form of worship. Even so, he healed the others; he did so for the lesson he wanted to give, and also to demonstrate their ingratitude. But who knows what resulted from this, and what benefit they attained from the grace they were granted? By saying to the Samaritan, "Your faith has saved you," Jesus implies that the same was not the case with the others.

The withered hand

18. *At another time, Jesus entered the synagogue, where he found a man who had a withered hand. And they watched Jesus to see if he would heal on the Sabbath so that they would have a reason to accuse him. He said to the man who had the withered hand, "Get up and stand there in their midst."*

Then, he asked them, "On the Sabbath, is it permissible to do good or evil, to save life or take it?" They remained silent. However, looking at them with indignation, he pitied them for the blindness of their hearts, and said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." He stretched it out and it became whole.
Immediately, the Pharisees left and held counsel with the Herodians against him as to how to cause his downfall. However, Jesus withdrew with his disciples to the sea, to where a large crowd of people had followed him from Galilee and Judea, from Jerusalem, Idumea and from beyond the Jordan. And having heard about the things he was doing, those from the area surrounding Tyre and Sidon came in large numbers to meet him. (Mk. 3:1-8).

The stooped woman

19. *Jesus taught in a synagogue every Sabbath. One day, he saw a woman possessed by a spirit who had made her infirm for eighteen years; and she was so stooped over that she could not look up at all. Upon seeing her, Jesus called to her and said, "Woman, you are free of your infirmity." At the same time, he placed his hands on her; and she immediately straightened up and gave thanks to God.*
But the head of the synagogue was indignant because Jesus had healed on a Sabbath, and he said to the people, "There are six days meant for work. Come here on one of those days to be healed and not on one of the Sabbaths."
The Lord then said to him, "Hypocrite, which one of you does not untie his ox or donkey from the manger on the Sabbath to lead it to drink? So why should this daughter of Abraham, whom Satan has kept bound for eighteen years, not be freed on the Sabbath from her bonds?"
At these words, all his adversaries became confused and all the people were thrilled at seeing him do such glorious things. (Lk. 13:10-17)

20. This incident shows that at that time most infirmities were attributed to a demon, and that, as today, possessions were confused with illnesses, but in a reverse sense; that is, nowadays those who do not believe in evil spirits confuse obsessions with pathological illnesses.

The paralytic by the pool

21. *Afterward, the celebration of the Jews having arrived, Jesus went to Jerusalem. Now, in Jerusalem was the Sheep Pool, called Bethesda in Hebrew, which had five colonnades, where a large number of infirm, blind and lame persons and others with withered limbs lay; all were waiting for the waters to become agitated, for at a certain time the angel of the Lord would descend to the pool and stir up the water; and whoever entered first after the water was stirred up was healed of whatever infirmity he had.*
Now, there was a man there who had been an invalid for thirty-eight years. Upon seeing him lying there, and knowing that he had been an invalid for such a long time, Jesus asked him, "Do you want to be healed?" The invalid answered, "Sir, I do not have anyone to throw me into the pool after the water is stirred up, and by the time it takes me to get there, someone else gets in ahead of me." Jesus said to him, "Get up, take your mat and walk." Immediately, the man was healed; and taking his mat, he began to walk. Now, it was a Sabbath day.
The Jews thus said to the one who had been healed, "Today is the Sabbath; you are not allowed to carry your mat." The man responded, "The one who healed me said, 'Take your mat and walk.'" They asked him, "Where is this man who told you, 'Take your mat and walk?' But the one who had been healed did not know, because Jesus had withdrawn from the crowd.
Afterward, Jesus found the man in the Temple and said to him, "You can see that you are healed; do not sin in the future or else something worse may happen to you."
The man went to find the Jews and told them that it was Jesus who had healed him. For that reason the Jews persecuted Jesus, because he was doing such things on the Sabbath. Then, Jesus said to them, "My Father has not ceased working even now, and I too work without ceasing." (Jn. 5:1-17)

22. Among the Romans, it is said that pools (from the Latin *piscis*, fish) were originally tanks or aquariums where fish were raised. Later, the meaning of the word was extended to the tanks where people bathed in common.
The pool at Bethesda in Jerusalem was a cistern close to the Temple and was fed by a natural spring whose water seemed to have had healing properties. Undoubtedly, it was an intermittent spring that at certain times forcefully gushed forth and stirred up the water. According to common

belief, that was the most favorable moment for healings; in reality, it could have been that, at the moment the water gushed forth, it had a more active property, or that the agitation caused by the gushing water carried minerals that were healthful for certain infirmities. Such effects are quite natural and well-known nowadays, but back then, the sciences were little advanced and a supernatural cause was seen behind the majority of misunderstood phenomena. Thus, the Jews attributed the stirring up of the water to the presence of an angel, and this belief seemed all the more well-founded because at that moment the water was more salutary.

After having healed the man, Jesus said to him, “Do not sin in the future or else something worse may happen to you.” With these words he gave him to understand that his infirmity was a punishment, and that if he did not improve himself, he could be punished again even more harshly. This doctrine is in complete conformance with what Spiritism teaches.

23. Jesus seems to have taken the task of performing such healings on the Sabbath in order to have the opportunity to protest against the strictness of the Pharisees with respect to observing that particular day. He wanted to show them that true piety does not consist in observing outward practices and formalities; rather, piety lies in the sentiments of the heart. He justified this by declaring, “My Father has not ceased working even now and I too work without ceasing.” What he meant was that God does not quit working or acting on the things of nature on the Sabbath. God continues to do whatever is necessary for your nourishment and your health, and I am God’s example.

The man blind from birth

24. *As Jesus was walking along, he saw a man who had been blind since birth; and his disciples asked him this question, “Lord, was it the sin of this man or the sin of those who brought him into the world that caused him to be born blind?”*

Jesus responded, “It is not he who sinned, nor those who brought him into the world; but it is so that the works of God’s power might shine in him. It is necessary that I do the works of the one who has sent me while it is still day; night is coming, in which no one can work. While I am in the world, I am the light of the world.

Having said this, he spit on the ground, and having made clay with his saliva, he anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay and said to him, “Go and wash in the pool of Siloam,” which means Sent. Then he went there, washed and returned seeing clearly.

His neighbors and those who had seen him previously begging for alms said, “Is this not he who used to sit and beg for alms?” Some answered, “It is him”; others said, “No, it is someone who looks like him.” But the man said to them, “It is I.” Then, they asked him, “How were your eyes opened?” He responded, “It was that man called Jesus; he made clay and with it he anointed my eyes, saying, ‘Go to the pool of Siloam and wash there.’ I went there, washed and now I see.” They asked him, “Where is he?” He answered, “I do not know.”

Then, they took the man who had been blind to the Pharisees. Now, it was on a Sabbath that Jesus had made the clay and opened his eyes.

The Pharisees also questioned him in order to find out how he had recovered his sight. He said to them, “He put clay on my eyes; I washed and now I can see,” to which some of the Pharisees said, “That man has not been sent from God, since he does not keep the Sabbath.” Others, however, said, “How could an evil man perform such wonders?” Hence, there was dissention among them.

They again asked the blind man, “And you, what do you say about the man who opened your eyes?” He responded, “I would say that he is a prophet.” But the Jews did not believe that the man had been blind and that he had received his sight until his father and mother came, whom they questioned saying, “Is that your son whom you say has been blind from birth? How, then, can he see now?” His

father and mother answered, "We know that he is our son and that he has been blind from birth; but we do not know how he can see now, and we do not know who opened his eyes. Ask him; he is of age and can answer for himself."
His father and mother spoke like this because they were afraid of the Jews, for the Jews had resolved together that whoever acknowledged Jesus as being the Christ would be thrown out of the synagogue. This is what motivated the father and mother to respond, "He is of age; ask him."
Once more they called the man who had been blind and told him, "Render glory to God. We know that this man is a sinner." He responded, "Whether or not he is a sinner, I know nothing about that. All I do know is that I was blind but now I can see." They asked him again, "What did he do to you and how did he open your eyes?" He answered, "I have already told you and you heard; why do you want to hear it again? Do you want to become his disciples?" At that, they hurled insults at him and said, "You can be his disciple; as for us, we are disciples of Moses. We know that God spoke to Moses, but as for this man, we do not even know where he came from."
The man responded, "It is really surprising that you do not know where he came from and that he opened my eyes. Now, we know that God does not listen to sinners; but if anyone honors him and does his will, he listens to him. Ever since the world has existed, no one has ever heard it said that someone has opened the eyes of a man blind from birth. If this man had not been sent by God, he could not do all the things that he has done."
The Pharisees said to him, "You have been nothing but a sinner from your mother's womb, and you want to teach us?" And they threw him out. (Jn. 9:1-34)

25. This narrative, so simple and naïve, bears within it an obvious character of truth. There is nothing fantastic or extraordinary about it. It is a scene from real life taken from a fact. The language of the blind man is precisely that of simple folk in whom knowledge is supplanted by common sense, and who respond to the arguments of their adversaries with straightforwardness, and for reasons that lack neither justice nor appropriateness. Is not the tone of the Pharisees that of the proud, who believe in nothing above their own intelligence, and who become indignant at the sole idea that a man of the people could show them a thing or two? Except for the local character of the situation, the same could apply to our times as well.

Being thrown out of the synagogue was like being put out of the Church. It was a kind of excommunication. Spiritists, whose doctrine is that of Christ interpreted according to the progress of today's knowledge, are treated like the Jews who acknowledged Jesus as the Messiah. In being excommunicated, they are set outside the Church; it is just like what the scribes and Pharisees did to the followers of Christ. Thus, here is a man who is thrown out because he cannot believe that the one who has healed him is possessed by a demon, and because he glorifies God for having been healed! Is that not what is done in regards to Spiritists? Whatever they obtain, whether wise counsels from spirits, a return to God and to goodness, or healings – all this is the work of the Devil and an anathema is published against them. Have we not seen priests declare from atop the pulpit that *it would be better to remain a disbeliever than to return to faith through Spiritism*? Has it not been said to the infirm that they must not be healed by spirits who possess this gift because it is Satanic? Or others who preach that the needy should not accept the bread distributed by Spiritists because it is the bread of the Devil? Besides, what else did the Jewish priests and Pharisees say and do? What is more, it has been stated that everything today must happen as it did in the time of Christ.

The disciples' question: Was it the sin of this man that caused him to be blind from *birth*? indicates an intuition about a previous existence; otherwise, it would not make sense, because a sin that would cause an infirmity from *birth* would have had to have been committed before birth, and therefore in a previous existence. If Jesus had seen it as being a wrong idea, he would have said, "How could this man have sinned before being born?" Instead, he said that the man was blind, not because he had sinned, but so that God's power could shine on him; that is, that he would be the instrument for a manifestation of God's power. If his blindness was not an expiation of the past, it was a trial that would serve for his advancement, because God, who is just, would not have imposed suffering without compensation.

As for the means employed to heal him, it is obvious that the kind of clay made from saliva and dirt could not have had any power except through the action of the healing fluid with which it was imbued. Thus it is that the most insignificant substances, – water, for example – may acquire powerful and effective qualities under the action of the spiritual or magnetic fluid, for which they serve as a vehicle, or if you prefer, a *reservoir.*

Several healings by Jesus

26. *Jesus was going throughout all Galilee, teaching in the synagogues, preaching the gospel of the Kingdom and healing all weaknesses and infirmities among the people. And since his reputation was spreading throughout Syria, all those who were infirm and diversely afflicted with pains and ills, the possessed, the insane and paralytics, were presented to him and he healed them. And a large crowd of people followed him from Galilee, the Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea and from beyond the Jordan. (Mt. 4:23-25)*

27. Of all the events that bear witness to Jesus' power, the most numerous are undoubtedly the healings. Through them he wanted to show that true power is that which does good and that his objective was to make himself useful – not to satisfy the curiosity of the indifferent with extraordinary things.

By alleviating suffering, he connected with people through their heart and made more numerous and more sincere proselytes than if they had been impressed only by visual spectacles. In this way he made himself loved, whereas if he had limited himself to producing impressive physical effects, as the Pharisees asked of him, most people would have seen him only as a sorcerer or a skillful magician, whom the *idle would have gone to see in order to be entertained*.

Thus, when John the Baptist sent his disciples to ask him if he was the Christ, he did not say, "Yes, I am," because any imposter could have said that. He did not speak of wonders or extraordinary things, but answered them simply, "Go tell John that the blind see, the infirm are healed, the deaf hear and the Gospel is being proclaimed to the poor." This was telling them, "Recognize me by my works; judge the tree by its fruit," because that was the true character of his divine mission.

28. It is also by means of the good it does that Spiritism proves its providential mission. It heals physical ills, but heals moral infirmities

especially, and therein lie the greatest wonders through which it affirms itself. Its most sincere adherents are not those who have been impressed by the sight of extraordinary phenomena, but those who have been touched in their souls by its consolation; those who have been freed from the torments of doubt; those whose courage has been revealed in affliction, who have gained strength in the certainty of the future that it has brought them, the knowledge of their spiritual being and their destiny. These are the ones whose faith is unshakable, because they feel and comprehend.

Those who see in Spiritism only physical effects cannot comprehend its moral power, neither can disbelievers who know Spiritism only by the phenomena whose primary cause they do not accept, and who see in Spiritists nothing more than sleight-of-hand artists and charlatans. Hence, it will not be through wonders that Spiritism will triumph over disbelief; instead, it will be through the increase of its moral benefits, because even if disbelievers do not believe in the wonders, they, like everyone else, do know suffering and affliction, and no one turns down relief and consolation.

Possessions

29. *Next they came to Capernaum; and on the Sabbath, Jesus entered the synagogue and began to teach them. They marveled at his doctrine because he was teaching them as one having authority and not as the scribes.*

Now, in the synagogue there was a man possessed by an unclean spirit, who was exclaiming, "What is there between you and us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are: you are the Holy One of God." Jesus, however, said to him threateningly, "Be quiet and come out of that man." Then, the unclean spirit threw the man into violent convulsions, let out a loud scream and came out of him.

All were so surprised by this that they asked one another, "What is this? What is this new doctrine? He orders with authority; even unclean spirits obey him. (Mk. 1:21-27)

30. *After they had left, they presented him with a mute man possessed by a demon. The demon having been cast out, the mute man spoke and the people were filled with wonder, saying, "We have never seen such a thing in Israel."*

But the Pharisees were saying otherwise: "It is by the prince of demons that he casts out demons." (Mt. 9:32-34)

31. *When he came to where his other disciples were, he saw a large crowd of people around them, and several scribes were arguing with them. Upon seeing Jesus, all the people were immediately taken by surprise and fear; they ran to greet him.*

Then he asked, "What are you arguing about?" And a man in the midst of the people said, "Master, I have brought you my son who is possessed with a mute spirit, and whenever it seizes him it throws him to the ground, and the boy foams at the mouth, gnashes his teeth and becomes rigid. I asked your disciples to cast it out but they could not."

Jesus answered them, "O disbelieving people, how long will I be with you? How long must I endure you? Bring him to me." They brought him and as soon as he saw Jesus, the spirit began to shake him violently. He fell to the ground, where he rolled around foaming at the mouth.

Jesus asked the boy's father, "How long has this been happening?" "Since infancy," said the father, "and the spirit sometimes casts him into the fire and sometimes into the water in order to kill him. If you can do something, have compassion and help us."

Jesus responded, "If you can believe, all things are possible for him who believes." Immediately the boy's father exclaimed to him in tears, "Lord, I believe; help me in my disbelief."

And seeing that a crowd was coming nearer, Jesus spoke threateningly to the unclean spirit, saying, "You deaf and mute spirit, I order you to come out of the boy and not to enter him again." Then the spirit, having let out a loud cry and having shaken him with violent convulsions, came out, and the boy remained as if dead, and many said that he was dead. But after Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him up, he stood up.

While Jesus was going home, his disciples asked him in private, "Why could we not cast the demon out?" He answered, "That kind of demon can be cast out only through prayer and fasting." (Mk. 9:13-28)

32. *Then, they presented him with a possessed man who was also blind and mute, and he healed him so that he began to talk and see. All the people were filled with wonder at this and asked, "Is this not the son of David?"*

But when the Pharisees heard this, they said, "This man casts out demons only by the power of Beelzebub, the prince of demons."

Now Jesus, knowing their thoughts, said to them, "Every kingdom divided against itself will be ruined and every city or house divided against itself cannot stand. If Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself. Therefore, how will his kingdom stand? And if it is by Beelzebub that I cast out demons, by whom do your sons cast them out? Thus, they themselves shall be your judges. But If I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, the kingdom of God has thus come to you." (Mt. 12:22-28)

33. Along with the healings, the liberating of the possessed figure among the most numerous acts of Jesus. Among the events of this nature, there are those, like the one narrated above in no. 30, where possession is not patent. It is probable that at that time, as is still the case nowadays, the influence of demons was attributed to all infirmities whose cause was unknown, especially muteness, epilepsy and catalepsy. There are others, however, in which the action of evil spirits cannot be doubted; they have such a striking similarity to those that we witness that we recognize in them all the symptoms of that type of ailment. The proof of the participation of a hidden intelligence in such a case stands out from a material fact: many radical healings have been obtained in some Spiritist centers solely by means of evoking and moralizing obsessor spirits, without magnetization or medication, and frequently with the patient absent and far away. Christ's immense ascendancy gave him such authority over imperfect spirits – at the time called demons – that all he had to do was order them to come out in such a way that they could not resist his command. (See chap. XIV, no. 46)

34. The incident where the evil spirits were sent into the bodies of pigs is contrary to all possibility. Moreover, it would be difficult to explain the presence of such a large herd of pigs in a country where these animals were regarded with disgust and offered no usefulness as food. An evil spirit is nonetheless a human spirit, although so imperfect that it continues to do evil after death just as it did before, and it is against the laws of nature for it to be able to live in the body of an animal. Hence, one must see here one of those exaggerations that were so common in times of ignorance and superstition; or perhaps an allegory meant to characterize the unclean tendencies of certain spirits.

35. Obsessed and possessed individuals seem to have been quite numerous in Judea at the time of Jesus, which provided him an opportunity to heal many. Undoubtedly, evil spirits had invaded that country and caused an epidemic of possessions. (See chap. XIV, no. 49)

Although not an epidemic, individual obsessions are extremely frequent and appear under the most varied aspects, a fact that may be recognized through an in-depth understanding of Spiritism. They can often have deplorable consequences for one's health, whether by aggravating organic afflictions or by causing them. Incontestably, they will someday be classified

among the pathological causes that require special curative measures due to their special nature. By revealing the true cause of the malady, Spiritism opens up a new path to the art of healing, and furnishes science a way to be successful where it fails frequently only because it does not attack the primary cause of the malady. (See *The Mediums' Book*, chap. XXIII)

36. Jesus was accused by the Pharisees of being assisted by demons in casting out demons. According to them, the good that Jesus was doing was the work of Satan. They did not reflect on the fact that if Satan cast himself out, he would be committing a nonsensical act. It is worth noting that the Pharisees at that time held that every reputedly transcendent – and for that reason, supernatural – faculty was the work of the Devil; thus, in their opinion Jesus himself had received his power from him. This is one more point of similarity with nowadays, and such a doctrine is still that of the Church, which today tries to prevail against spirit manifestations.[2]

Resurrections

Jairus' daughter

37. *Jesus again crossed over by boat to the other side, and a large crowd gathered around him as soon as he was close to the sea. And a head of the synagogue, named Jairus, came looking for him, and finding him he threw himself at his feet, begging vehemently, saying, "I have a daughter who is about to die; come and put you hands on her in order to heal her and save her life."*

Jesus went there with him, followed by a large crowd who pressed around him....

While Jesus was still speaking, some of the head of the synagogue's house came and said to him, "Your daughter is dead; why do you want to put the Master to the trouble of going any further?" Upon hearing this, however, Jesus said to the head of the synagogue, "Do not be troubled; only believe." And he allowed no one to accompany him except Peter, James and John, James' brother.

Having arrived at the home of the head of the synagogue, he saw a distraught group of people who were crying and wailing. Entering the home, he said to them, "Why are you making so much noise and why are you crying? The girl is not dead; she is only sleeping." They scoffed at him. Having made everyone leave, he took the child's father and mother and those who had come with him, and he went into the place where the girl was lying. He took her hand and said, "Talitha cumi," that is, "My child, I order you to get up." At that instant the girl got up and began walking. She was twelve years old and they were marvelously astonished. (Mk. 5:21-24, 35-43)

The son of the widow from Nain

38. *The next day, Jesus went to a town called Nain, and his disciples accompanied him with a large crowd of people. When he was close to the city's gate, a dead person was being readied for burial. He was the only son of his mother, who was a widow; and a large number of people from the town were with her. When he saw her, the Lord was touched with compassion and said to her, "Weep no more." Then, approaching the coffin, he touched it, and those who were carrying it stopped. Then Jesus said, "Young man, I order you to get up." Immediately, he who was dead sat up and began to speak, and Jesus gave him back to his mother.*

All those present were taken with fear and glorified God saying, "A great prophet has appeared in our midst and God has visited his people." Word of this miracle spread throughout Judea and all the neighboring regions. (Lk. 7:11-17)

39. The occurrence of the return to corporeal life by a truly dead individual would be contrary to the laws of nature and, consequently, miraculous. However, it is not necessary to resort to that order of phenomena to explain the resurrections performed by Christ.

If appearances sometimes deceive even professionals nowadays, instances of this sort must have been much more frequent in a country where no precautions were taken and where burial was immediate.[3] Thus, there is

all probability that in the two cases cited above there was only syncope or lethargy involved. Jesus himself obviously said this about Jairus' daughter: "*The girl is not dead but is only asleep.*"

As a consequence of the fluidic power that Jesus possessed, there is nothing surprising that this vivifying fluid, directed by a powerful will, had reanimated numbed senses; that he had even been able to call back to the body – as long as the perispiritual tie was not definitely broken – the spirit that was ready to abandon it. For people at that time, who believed a person was dead as soon as the breath stopped, there was a resurrection, and they could affirm it in good faith; however, in reality there was a *healing* and not a resurrection in the true meaning of the word.

40. No matter what may be said, the resurrection of Lazarus in no way invalidates this principle. It is stated that he had been in the tomb for four days; however, it is well known that there are lethargies that last eight days or more. One might add that Lazarus already smelled bad, which is a sign of decomposition. This allegation also proves nothing, keeping in mind that in certain individuals there is partial decomposition of the body even before death, and they give off a rotten smell. Death arrives only when the organs essential to life are stricken.

And who could affirm that Lazarus in fact smelled rotten? It is his sister Martha who says so, but did she know it for a fact? Lazarus had been buried for four days, so she assumed it, but there was no way she could have been certain. (See chap. XIV, no. 29)[4]

Jesus walks on water

41. *Immediately, Jesus had his disciples get into a boat to go to the other side ahead of him while he sent away the multitudes. After having sent them away, he went up on a mountain by himself to pray, and since evening had fallen, he found himself alone there.*

Meanwhile, the boat was being buffeted by the waves in the middle of the sea, because the wind was against it. Nevertheless, during the fourth watch of the evening, Jesus came to them walking on the sea.[5] When they saw him walking on the sea, they became confused and said, "It is a ghost," and they cried out in fear. Immediately, Jesus then said to them, "Peace be with you; it is I; do not be afraid."

Peter responded, "Lord, if it is you, order me to come to you walking on the water." Jesus said to him, "Come." And Peter got out of the boat and walked on the water to go to Jesus. However, a strong wind arose and he was afraid; and when he began to sink, he exclaimed, "Lord, save me." Jesus immediately extended his hand, took hold of him and said, "O man of little faith, why did you doubt?" And when they had gotten back into the boat, the wind stopped. Then, those who were in the boat drew close to him and worshipped him, saying, "You are truly the son of God." (Mt. 14:22-33)

42. This phenomenon finds its natural explanation in the principles set forth above in chap. XIV, no. 43.

Similar examples demonstrate that it is neither impossible nor miraculous since it lies within the laws of nature. It can be produced in two ways.

Although he was alive, Jesus could appear on the water in tangible form while his body was elsewhere: this is the most probable hypothesis. In the story one can even recognize certain signs that are characteristic of tangible apparitions. (See chap. XIV, nos. 35-37).

On the other hand, his body could possibly have been held up and gravity neutralized by the same fluidic force that holds a table in the air without a

point of support. The same effect has often been produced involving human bodies.

The transfiguration

43. *Six days later, Jesus took Peter, James and John and led them alone with him to a high mountain in an isolated place[6], where he was transfigured in front of them. And while he was praying, his face appeared completely different; his garments turned brilliantly luminous and as white as snow, such that no bleach on earth could have made them so white. And Elijah and Moses appeared and began conversing with Jesus.*
Then, Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good that we are here; let us make three shelters – one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah," for he did not know what he was saying, being so afraid.
At the same time, a cloud appeared, which covered them; and from the cloud a voice came proclaiming these words, "This is my beloved Son; listen to him."
Immediately upon looking around, they saw no one except Jesus, who remained alone with them.
When they were coming down from the mountain, he ordered them not to tell anyone about what they had seen until the Son of Man was raised from the dead. And they kept these things secret, asking each other what he had meant by the words: Until the Son of Man was raised from the dead. (Mk. 9:1-9)

44. It is once more in the properties of the perispiritual fluid that the explanation of this phenomenon may be found. Transfiguration, explained in chap. XIV, no. 39, is a very common phenomenon, which, as a result of fluidic radiation, can change an individual's appearance. However, the purity of Jesus' perispirit enabled his spirit to give him an exceptional brilliance. As for the apparition of Moses and Elijah, it falls completely within the realm of all the phenomena of the same genre. (See chap. XIV, nos. 35 ff.)

Of all the faculties revealed in Jesus, there were none which were outside the conditions of humanity, or which could not be found in the most ordinary individuals, because such faculties are part of nature. However, because of the superiority of his moral essence and his fluidic qualities, such faculties attained proportions in him far above those of the common folk. Apart from his corporeal envelope, they would represent for us the state of the pure spirits.

Jesus calms the storm

45. *One day, he was in a boat with his disciples and said to them, "Let us go to the other side of the lake. Then, they set out. And while they were crossing, he fell asleep. A great windstorm suddenly struck the lake so that their boat, filling with water, was in danger. His disciples approached him and woke him up, saying, "Master, we are perishing." Jesus got up, spoke threateningly to the wind and the raging waves; they subsided and there was a great calm. Then, he said to them, "Where is your faith?" However, they were full of fear and wonder and asked one another, "Who is this who orders the wind and waves in such a way and they obey him?" (Lk. 8:22-25)*

46. We do not yet know enough about the secrets of nature to say whether or not there are hidden intelligences that preside over the action of the elements. If such a hypothesis were affirmed, the phenomenon in question could have been the result of an act of authority over such intelligences and would demonstrate a power that has not been given to any man or woman to exercise.

In any case, Jesus sleeping peacefully during the storm attests to a confidence that may be explained by the fact that his spirit *saw* that there was no danger, and that the storm would subside.

The wedding at Cana

47. This miracle, mentioned only in the Gospel of John, is presented as being the first one Jesus performed, and as such, it must have been one of the most noteworthy; however, it seems to have had very small impact because none of the other Evangelists mention it. An event so extraordinary should have caused the highest degree of wonder among the guests, and especially the owner of the house, but they do not seem to have noticed it at all.

Considered by itself, the incident has little importance in comparison with those that truly attest to Jesus' spiritual qualities. Supposing that things occurred as they are narrated, it is remarkable that this is the only phenomenon of this genre that he produced. He was of a nature too high to become involved with purely physical effects, suitable only to stimulate the curiosity of the crowd, who would have likened him to a magician. He knew that useful things would win him more sympathy and would bring him more followers than those that could pass as sleight-of-hand without touching the heart. (See no. 27)

Although this incident could possibly be explained up to a certain extent by a fluidic action, which, like the examples offered by magnetism, would have changed the properties of the water giving it the flavor of wine, this hypothesis is not very probable, considering in such a case that the water, having only the taste of wine, would have retained its color – a fact which would not have failed to be noticed. It is more reasonable to see in this one of those parables that are so frequent in the teachings of Jesus, like that of the prodigal son, the wedding feast, the unrighteous rich man, the withered fig tree, and such others, which nonetheless have the character of actual events. During the meal, he could have made an allusion to wine and water, deriving a teaching from both. What justifies this opinion are the words addressed by the steward on this subject: "Every man first serves the good wine, and after much has been drunk, inferior wine is served; as for you, you have saved the good wine until now."

Between these two hypotheses, one must choose the most rational, and Spiritists are not so gullible as to see only manifestations everywhere, nor are they so extreme in pretending to explain everything by fluids.

The multiplication of the loaves

48. The multiplication of the loaves is one of the miracles that have most intrigued commentators; at the same time it has incited the eloquence of disbelievers. Without going to the trouble of probing its allegorical meaning, they see it as only a childish story. However, the majority of serious persons have seen in this narrative, although in an unusual form, a parable comparing the spiritual nourishment of the soul with the nourishment of the body.

Nonetheless, one may see in it more than an allegory and, from a certain point of view, one may accept the reality of a factual event without having

to resort to a miracle. It is known that intense mental preoccupation or attention given to a matter can make one forget hunger. Now, those following Jesus were individuals eager to listen to him. Consequently, there is nothing surprising that, fascinated by what he was saying and also, perhaps, by the powerful magnetic action he was exerting on them, they had not felt the physical need to eat.

Because he had foreseen this result, Jesus could thus put his disciples at ease by telling them in his usual, figurative language that the loaves – assuming there really were a few loaves – would suffice to satiate the crowd. At the same time, he was providing his disciples with a lesson: "You yourselves give them something to eat," he said. He was thus teaching them that they too could provide nourishment by means of the word.

In this way, besides the moral-allegorical meaning, a natural, very common physiological effect was produced. The miracle in this case lies in the ascendancy of Jesus' word, which was powerful enough to capture the attention of a huge crowd to the point of making them forget to eat. Such moral power proves Jesus' superiority much more than would the purely physical occurrence of the multiplying of the loaves, which must be taken as an allegory.

Moreover, this explanation is confirmed by Jesus himself in the following two passages.

The yeast of the Pharisees

49. *Now, his disciples, having crossed to the other side, forgot to bring bread along. Jesus said to them, "Take care to guard yourselves against the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees." But they thought and said to each other, "It is because we did not bring any bread."*

Jesus knew what they were thinking and said, "Men of little faith, why are you telling each other that you did not bring any bread? Do you still not understand and do you not remember that five loaves were enough for five thousand men, and how many baskets-full you collected? Why do you not understand that I was not talking to you about bread when I told you to guard yourselves against the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees?"

Then, they understood that he was not telling them to guard themselves against the yeast that is added to bread, but the doctrine of the Pharisees and Sadducees. (Mt. 16:5-12)

The bread of heaven

50. *On the following day, the people, who had remained on the other side of the sea, noticed that there was no other boat there, and that Jesus had not gotten into the one with his disciples, but that only the disciples had gone. And since other boats from Tiberiades had arrived later close to the place where the Lord had fed them with the five loaves after giving thanks, and since they finally realized that neither Jesus nor his disciples were there, they got into the boats and went to Capernaum in search of Jesus. When they found him on the other side of the sea, they said to him, "Lord, when did you get here?"*

Jesus answered them, "Verily, verily I say to you that you have come looking for me not because of the miracles you saw, but because I gave you bread to eat and you were satisfied. Work not in order to have food that perishes but food that endures to eternal life, and which the Son of Man will give to you, because it is upon him that God the Father has placed his seal and character."

They asked him, "What must we do to do the works of God?" Jesus replied, "The work of God is that you believe in him whom he has sent."
They further asked him, "Then what miracle will you perform so that in seeing it we may believe in you? What will you do that is extraordinary? Our ancestors ate manna in the desert, according to what is written: 'He gave them bread from heaven to eat.'"
Jesus responded, "Verily, verily I say to you that Moses did not give you bread from heaven; but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven, for the bread of God is he who has descended from heaven and gives life to the world."
Then they said to him, "Lord, give us always of this bread."
Jesus answered, "I am the bread of life. He who comes to me shall not hunger and he who believes in me shall never thirst. But I have already told you: you have seen me but you have not believed.
"Verily, verily I say to you, he who believes in me has eternal life. I am the bread of life. Your ancestors ate manna in the desert and they are dead. But here is the bread that has come down from heaven, so that whoever eats it shall not die" (Jn. 6:22-36, 47-50)

51. In the first passage, Jesus, recalling the effect produced previously, clearly means that he had not dealt with physical loaves; otherwise, the comparison he had made with the yeast of the Pharisees would have lacked an object: "*Do you still not understand,"* he said, "and do you not remember that five loaves were enough for five thousand men, and that seven loaves were enough for four thousand? How is it that you do not understand that I was not speaking to you about bread when I told you to guard yourselves against the yeast of the Pharisees?" This comparison would have been meaningless in the event of a physical multiplication. The incident was extraordinary enough in and of itself to have struck the imagination of his disciples, who, however, did not seem to remember it.

This is what is emphasized no less clearly in Jesus' discourse on the bread of heaven, in which he tries to make the true meaning of spiritual food understood. "Work," he said, "not in order to have food that perishes but food that endures to eternal life, and which the Son of Man will give to you." This food is his word, which is the bread that has come down from heaven and gives life to the world. "I am the bread of life," he declares. *"He who comes to me shall not hunger and he who believes in me shall never thirst*."

Such distinctions, however, were too subtle for those unrefined natures, who could understand only tangible things. For them, the manna that had fed the bodies of their ancestors was the true bread from heaven: that was a miracle. Thus, if the incident of the multiplication had occurred materially, how could these same persons, for whom it had been produced a few days earlier, have been so little impressed as to say to Jesus, "What miracle will you perform so that by seeing it we may believe in you? What will you do that is extraordinary?" It is because they understood miracles to mean the wonders that the Pharisees asked for, that is, signs in the sky at Jesus' orders, as if by a magician's wand. What Jesus did was very simple and did not depart from the laws of nature; the healings themselves did not display a character sufficiently strange or extraordinary. Spiritual miracles did not hold enough substance for them.

The temptation of Jesus

52. Jesus being taken by the Devil to the pinnacle of the Temple and then to a mountain to be tempted by him is one of those parables that were

characteristic of him, and which public credulity has transformed into an actual event.[7]

53. “Jesus was not actually taken, but only wanted to enable men and women to understand that humans are subject to failure and that they must always be on guard against evil inspirations, to which their weak nature leads them to yield. Hence, the temptation of Jesus is an allegory and one would have to be blind to take it literally. How could you believe that the Messiah, the Word of God incarnate, was submitted for even a short amount of time to the suggestions of the Devil, and that, as it says in the Gospel of Luke, the Devil left him *for a while*, which would imply that he was submitted further to the Devil’s power? No. You must better understand the teachings that have been given to you. The Spirit of Evil could do nothing with respect to the Essence of the Good. No one ever affirmed having seen Jesus on the mountain or the pinnacle of the Temple; that would certainly have been an incident worth spreading amongst all the people at the time. The temptation was not, therefore, a material, physical act. As for the moral act, could you believe that the Spirit of Darkness – who knew Jesus’ origin and power – could say, ‘Worship me and I will give you all the kingdoms of the earth?’ If so, the Devil would have been unaware as to whom he was making such an offer, which is improbable. If he did know who Jesus was, his proposals were nonsense, because he would have known very well that they would be rejected by the one who had come to destroy his rule over humankind.

“Therefore, you must understand the meaning of this parable, because that is all that it is – like the parables of the *Prodigal Son* and the *Good Samaritan*. The former shows us the dangers that people face if they do not resist that inner voice that clamors to them unceasingly, ‘You can be more than you are; you can possess more than you have; you can thrive, acquire; yield to the voice of ambition and all your desires will be satisfied.’ It shows us the danger and the means to avoid it by saying to such evil inspirations, *‘Be gone, Satan!’* or in other words, ‘*Be gone, temptation!*’

“The two other parables that I have mentioned show you what may still await those who, because they are too weak to keep the Devil away, succumb to his temptations. They show us the mercy of the family father laying his hand on his repentant son’s brow and lovingly granting him the forgiveness he has begged for. They show us that the guilty, the schismatic, those rejected by their siblings, are more valuable in the eyes of the Supreme Judge than those who scorn them, because they practice the virtues taught by the law of love.

“Weigh well the teachings given in the Gospel. Know how to distinguish between what is literal and what is figurative, and the errors that have blinded you for so many centuries will be erased little by little, giving way to the shining light of the truth.”

John the Evangelist (Bordeaux, 1862)

Wonders surrounding the death of Jesus

54. *Now, from the sixth hour of the day until the ninth, the whole earth was covered in darkness.*
At the same time, the veil in the Temple was torn in two from top to bottom; the earth shook; the rocks split; the graves were opened and many bodies of saints, who were in the sleep of death, came back to life; and leaving their graves after Jesus' resurrection, they came to the holy city and were seen by many people. (Mt. 27: 45, 51-53)

55. It is strange that such wonders, occurring at the same moment in which the city's attention was fixed upon Jesus' death – the event of the day – went unnoticed, for no historian makes the least reference to them. It seems impossible that an earthquake and the *whole earth* covered in darkness for three hours in a country where the sky is always perfectly clear could have gone unnoticed.

The length of such darkness was nearly that of an eclipse of the sun, but eclipses of that type occur only during the time of the new moon, and Jesus' death occurred during the full moon on the 14th day of the month of Nissan, the day of the Jewish Passover.

The darkening of the sun could also have been caused by sunspots, which may be observed on its surface. In such case, the brilliance of its light is weakened noticeably, but never to the point of causing obscurity and darkness. Admitting that a phenomenon of this kind had actually occurred at that time, it would have had to have had a perfectly natural cause.[8]

As for the dead who came back to life, it could be that *a few persons* had seen visions or apparitions, which is not unusual. However, since they were not aware of the cause of such phenomena, they supposed that the figures they saw had come from the grave.

Distressed by the death of their Lord, Jesus' disciples undoubtedly connected it with a few particular events, to which on any other occasion they would not have paid any attention. It would have been enough for a piece of rock at that moment to have split apart for individuals inclined to the extraordinary to have regarded it as a wonder, and who, exaggerating the fact, stated that the rocks had split apart.

Jesus is great due to his works and not due to fantastic imagery with which enthusiasm with little enlightenment believed it necessary to surround him.

The apparition of Jesus after his death

56. *Shedding tears, Mary (Magdalene), however, remained outside close to the tomb. And as she was weeping, she bent down to look inside the tomb and saw two angels dressed in white and seated in the place where Jesus' body had been, one at the head and the other at the feet. They said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping?" She answered, "They have taken my Lord and I do not know where they have put him."*
Having said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not know that it was Jesus. Then, he said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? Who are you looking for?" Thinking he was the gardener, she said to him, "Sir, if you are the one who took him, tell me where you have put him and I will take him."
Jesus said to her, "Mary." She immediately turned toward him and said, "Rabboni"; that is, My Lord. Jesus responded, "Do not touch me, for I have not yet ascended to my Father; but go to my brethren and tell them for me, "I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God."
Mary Magdalene then went to tell the disciples that she had seen the Lord and that he had told her these things. (Jn. 20:11-18)

57. *On that same day, two of them were going toward a town called Emmaus, which was about sixty stadia from Jerusalem. They were talking about everything that had happened. And while they were talking and discussing the matter, Jesus himself came to join them and began walking with them. But their eyes were restrained so that they could not recognize him. He asked them, "What have you been talking about as you walk along, and where have you come from that you are so sad?"*
One of them, named Cleopas, asked him, "Are you so foreign to Jerusalem that you do not know what has happened these last few days?" "What has happened?" he asked. They answered, "Regarding Jesus of Nazareth, who was a powerful prophet before God and before all the people; and about the way in which the chief priests and our elders handed him over to be condemned to death and crucified him. We were hoping that he was the one who would redeem Israel, but now this is the third day after such things occurred. It is true that certain women, of those who used to be with us, have surprised us, for they went to his tomb before daybreak; and not having found his body, they came back to say that angels had appeared to them saying that he was alive. And some of us also went to the tomb and found everything according to what the women had told them; but as for him, they did not find him.
Then he said to them, "O foolish ones, whose hearts are slow to believe in everything that the prophets have said! Did not the Christ have to suffer all those things in order to enter into his glory?" And beginning with Moses, and then with all the prophets, he explained to them what all the Scriptures had said about him.
When they were near the town to which they were headed, he seemed as if he were going to go farther. But they urged him to tarry, saying, "Stay with us, for it is late and the day is already fading." He went in with them. With them at the table, he took the bread, blessed it, broke it and gave it to them. At that moment, their eyes were opened and they recognized him; however, he disappeared before their eyes.
Then, they said to each other, "Is it not true that our hearts burned within us as he was speaking with us on the road, and as he was explaining the Scriptures to us?" And rising at that instant, they returned to Jerusalem and saw that the eleven apostles and those who continued with them were assembled. They said, "The Lord has truly risen and he appeared to Simon. Then, the two also related what had happened to them on the road and how they had recognized him when he broke the bread.
While they were talking about this, Jesus himself appeared in their midst and said to them, "Peace be with you; it is I; do not be afraid." However, in the confusion and fear that gripped them, they imagined they were seeing a spirit.
And Jesus said to them, "Why are you troubled? Why do such thoughts arise in your hearts? Look at my hands and feet and know that it is I; touch me and remember that a spirit does not have flesh or bones as you see that I have." Having said this, he showed them his hands and feet.
But since they still did not believe because they were so taken with joy and wonder, he said to them, "Do you have anything here to eat?" They gave him a piece of baked fish and some honeycomb. He ate in front of them, and taking the rest he gave it to them, saying, "This is what I told you when I was still with you: that it was necessary for everything that was written about me in the law of Moses, the prophets and the Psalms to be fulfilled.
At the same time, he opened their minds so that they could understand the Scriptures; and he said to them, "Thus it is written, and thus it would be necessary for the Christ to suffer, and that he would rise from the dead on the third day; and that repentance and the remission of sins would be preached in his name to all nations, beginning in Jerusalem. Now, you are witnesses of these things. I will send you the gift of my Father, which was promised to you; but for now, remain in the city until I have clothed you with power from On High." (Lk. 24:13-49)
58. *However, Thomas, called Didymus, one of the twelve apostles, was not with them when Jesus came. The other disciples said to him, "We have seen the Lord." But he said to them, "Unless I see the nail marks in his hands, place my finger in the nail holes, and put my hand in the hole in his side, I shall not believe."*
Eight days later, the disciples were in the same place and Thomas was with them. Jesus appeared to them while the doors were closed and stood in their midst, and said to them, "Peace be with you."
Then he said to Thomas, "Place your finger here and look at my hands; also stretch out your hand and place it in my side and be no longer disbelieving, but faithful." Thomas responded and said to him, "My Lord and my God!" Jesus said to him, "Thomas, you believe because you have seen; blessed are they who believe without having seen." (Jn. 20:24-29)
59. *Afterward, Jesus also showed himself again to his disciples on the shore of the Sea of Tiberius. He showed himself in this way:*
Simon Peter and Thomas, called Didymus, Nathanael, who was from Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee and two other disciples were all together. Simon Peter said to them, "I am going fishing."

They said to him, “We are going with you.” They got into a boat, but they did not catch any fish that night.
When morning came, Jesus appeared on the shore, but his disciples did not realize that it was Jesus. He said to them, “My sons, have you nothing to eat?” They answered, “No.” He said to them, “Cast your net on the right side of the boat and you will find some.” They cast it right away and could not haul it in because it was so loaded with fish.
Then, the disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, “It is the Lord.” And realizing that it was the Lord, Simon Peter put on his clothes (because he was naked) and jumped into the sea. The other disciples came with the boat; and since they were no more than two hundred cubits from the shore, they dragged the net full of fish. (Jn. 21:1-8)
***60.** Afterward, he led them to Bethany, and having raised his hands, he blessed them. And having blessed them, he left and was taken up into heaven.*
As for them, after they had worshipped him, they returned to Jerusalem full of joy. They were constantly in the temple, praising and blessing God. Amen. (Lk. 24:50-53).

61. The apparitions of Jesus after his death are narrated by the Evangelists with circumstantial details that allow for no doubt as to their reality. What is more, the apparitions are perfectly explained by the fluidic laws and the properties of the perispirit, and present nothing abnormal with the phenomena of the same genre, of which ancient and contemporary history offer numerous examples, to the point of not even excluding tangibility. If one would observe the circumstances that accompanied his many apparitions, one would recognize in him at such moments all the characteristics of a fluidic being. He appears unexpectedly and disappears in the same way; he is seen by some but not by others, under appearances that make him unrecognizable even to his disciples; he shows himself in closed rooms, where a corporeal body could not enter; even his language lacks the verve of a corporeal being; it has a brief and succinct manner peculiar to spirits who manifest in that way; in other words, all his attitudes denote something that is not of the terrestrial world. Seeing him causes both surprise and fear at the same time; his disciples cannot speak with him with the same freedom as before; they sense that he is no longer a man.

Jesus, however, showed himself with his perispiritual body, which explains why he was seen only by those whom he wanted to see him. If he had had his corporeal body, he would have been seen by the first one who came to him, just as when he was alive. His disciples, being unaware of the primary cause of the phenomena of apparitions, did not perceive their particularities, which they probably did not notice. Since they saw Jesus and touched him, to them this must have been his resuscitated body. (See chap. XIV, nos. 14, 35-38)

62. While disbelief rejects all the phenomena performed by Jesus because they have a supernatural appearance, and, without exception, regards them as legends, Spiritism provides a natural explanation for most of such phenomena. It demonstrates how they are possible, not only by means of the theory of the fluidic laws, but by means of their identity with similar phenomena caused by a large number of individuals under the most ordinary circumstances. Since the phenomena are more or less in the public domain, they prove nothing in principle concerning the exceptional nature of Jesus.[9]

63. The greatest of the miracles that Jesus performed, the one that truly attests to how highly evolved he was, is the revolution that his teachings have caused throughout the world in spite of the limits of his field of action.
Actually, Jesus – obscure, poor, born in the most humble circumstances amongst a people with no might, nearly ignored and without any political, artistic or literary clout – preached for only three years. Throughout that short span of time he was unacknowledged, slandered, treated as an imposter and persecuted by his fellow citizens; he had to flee in order not to be stoned to death; he was betrayed by one of his own disciples and denied by another; he was abandoned by all of them at the moment he fell into the hands of his enemies. He practiced only the good, but that did not protect him from the malevolence that turned the very services he rendered against him. Condemned to a death reserved for criminals, he died ignored by the world – contemporary history is silent on this account.[10] He wrote nothing; nonetheless, aided by a few individuals who were as obscure as he was, his word was sufficient to regenerate the world; his doctrine slew all-powerful paganism and became the flame of civilization. Against him was everything that makes human beings fail, which is why we have said that the triumph of his doctrine was the greatest of his miracles, while at the same time it proved his mission to have been divine. If instead of social and regenerative principles founded upon humankind's spiritual future he had offered posterity only a few extraordinary phenomena, perhaps today hardly anyone would recognize his name.

The disappearance of Jesus' body

64. The disappearance of Jesus' body after his death has been the object of numerous commentaries. It is attested to by the four Evangelists based on the report of the women who went to his tomb on the third day, only to find that he was not there. Some have seen a miraculous event in this disappearance; others attribute it to a clandestine removal.
According to another opinion, Jesus did not have a corporeal body at all, but only a fluidic one. Throughout his entire life, he was only a tangible apparition; in other words, a kind of agenerate[11]. His birth, death and all the physical acts of his life were only an appearance. Thus it has been said that his body, having returned to the fluidic state, could disappear from the tomb and it was with this same body that he showed himself after his death.
Without a doubt, such a fact is not radically impossible, according to what is known today about the properties of the fluids. However, it would at the least be completely exceptional and in formal opposition to the character of agenerates (see chap. XIV, no. 36). The issue is therefore to determine if such a hypothesis is acceptable, and whether it is confirmed or contradicted by the facts.
65. Jesus' stay on the earth entails two periods: that which precedes his death and that which follows it. In the former, from the moment of conception to birth, everything regarding his mother happens as it does in

the normal conditions of life.[12] From his birth until his death, everything about his acts, his language and the various circumstances of his life reveals the unequivocal characteristics of corporeality. The psychic phenomena that occur in him are unexpected but there is nothing abnormal about them, since they can be explained by the properties of the perispirit, and may be found in differing degrees among other individuals. After his death, on the other hand, everything about him reveals a fluidic being. The difference between these two states is so noticeable that they cannot be compared.

The corporeal body has the properties inherent to matter per se, properties that differ essentially from those of the ethereal fluids. In matter, breakdown occurs because of the rupture of molecular cohesion. A cutting instrument can penetrate the physical body and divide its tissues. If the organs essential to life are attacked, the body stops functioning and death follows, that is, the death of the body. Since this cohesion does not exist in fluidic bodies, life does not lie in the functioning of special organs; disorders analogous to those of the physical body cannot be produced. A cutting instrument or any other can penetrate a fluidic body like a cloud of vapor without causing any sort of lesion. That is why bodies of this kind *cannot die* and why fluidic beings called *agenerates* cannot be killed.

After the death of Jesus, his inert and lifeless body was entombed like any other body and anyone could see and touch it. After his resurrection, when he was ready to leave earth behind, he did not die again; instead, his body rose, dissipated and vanished without leaving a trace – obvious proof that that body was of a different nature than the one that perished on the cross. Hence, one must conclude that if Jesus could die it was because he had a body of flesh.

Due to its material properties, the corporeal body is the seat of sensation and physical pain, which reverberate within the sensitive center or spirit. It is not the body that suffers; it is the spirit, which receives the counterblow from the lesions or alterations in the organic tissues. In a body deprived of the spirit, sensation is lacking entirely. For the same reason, the spirit that has no physical body cannot experience suffering, which is the result of the alteration of matter. Hence, one must also conclude that if Jesus suffered physically – which cannot be doubted – it was because he had a physical body of a nature similar to everybody else's.

66. The strongest moral considerations must be added to the physical events.

If during his life Jesus existed in the state of fluidic beings, he would have felt neither pain nor bodily needs. To suppose such to have been the case is to take from him all the merit of the life of privation and suffering that he chose as an example of resignation. If everything in his life was only an appearance, all the events of his life, his repeated statements regarding his death, the dolorous scene in the Garden of Olives, his prayer to God to remove the cup from his lips, his passion and death – everything up to the last cry when he delivered up his spirit – would have been only a vain sham

of deception regarding his true nature and meant to create a belief in the illusory sacrifice of his life, a farce unworthy of a simple and honest man, and, for even more reason, of such a highly evolved being. In other words, he would have abused the good faith of his contemporaries and all posterity. Such are the logical consequences of that theory, consequences that are unacceptable because they morally degrade rather than elevate him.[13]

Thus, like any other man, Jesus had both a corporeal body and a fluidic one, a fact attested to by the physical and psychic phenomena that highlighted his life.

67. This idea about the nature of Jesus' body is nothing new. In the fourth century, Apollinarius of Laodicea, head of the Apollinarian sect, claimed that Jesus had not taken a body like ours, but rather an *impassible* body that descended out of heaven into the lap of the Holy Virgin, but which was not born from her. Thus, Jesus had not been born and had not suffered or died except in *appearance*. The Apollinarians were anathematized by the Council of Alexandria in 360, the Council of Rome in 374 and the Council of Constantinople in 381.

The Docetists (from the Greek dokein, to appear), a prolific sect of *Gnostics* that survived for the first three centuries, held the same belief.

[1] The biblical passages are direct translations from Sacy's French version, used by Kardec. – Tr.

[2] Not all theologians profess such absolute opinions concerning the demoniac doctrine. Here is one by an ecclesiastic, the value of which the clergy could not dispute. The following passage may be found in the Conférences sur la religion, by Monsignor Frayssinous, Bishop of Hermopolis, vol. II, p. 341 (Paris, 1825):

"If Jesus had performed such miracles by means of the power of the Devil, it would have worked for the destruction of his authority and would have employed his own power against him. Obviously, a Devil who sought to destroy the kingdom of vice in order to establish the kingdom of virtue would be a strange Devil. That is why Jesus, in order to rebuff the absurd accusation of the Jews, said to them, "If I perform wonders in the name of the Devil, then the Devil is divided against himself and seeks to destroy himself!" – a response that needs no reply.

This is precisely the argument that Spiritists use to oppose those who attribute to the Devil the good counsels they receive from spirits. The Devil would be like a professional thief who returned everything he had stolen and exhorted other thieves to become honest individuals – Auth.

[3] Proof of this custom may be found in Acts 5:5 ff.: "When Ananias heard these words, he fell over and gave up his spirit; and all who heard about it were taken with great fear. Immediately, some young men came to get his body, and after wrapping it, they buried it. Around three hours later, his wife (Sapphira), who did not know what had happened, came in. And Peter said to her.... [etc.] At that very moment she fell at his feet and gave up her spirit. The young men entered, found her dead; and wrapping her, they buried her together with her husband." – Auth.

[4] The following incident proves that decomposition sometimes precedes death. In the Convent of the Good Shepherd, founded in Toulon by penal colony chaplain Abbot Marin for repentant women, there was a girl who had borne the most horrible sufferings with the composure and impassiveness of an expiatory victim. In the midst of her pain, she seemed to smile as if she were having a heavenly vision. Like St. Teresa, she asked to suffer even more, her flesh in tatters and gangrene destroying her limbs. Out of wise foresight, the doctors had recommended that they inter the body right after death. How strange! As soon as she let out her last breath, the whole process of decomposition stopped, the cadaverous exhalations ceased and for thirty-six hours she remained exposed to the prayers and veneration of the community – Auth.

[5] Lake Gennesaret or Tiberiades – Auth.

[6] Mt. Tabor, to the southwest of Lake Tiberiades and eleven kilometers [app. 6.8 miles] southeast of Nazareth, with a height of about 1,000 meters [app. 3,280 feet] – Auth.

[7] The following explanation is the textual reproduction of a spirit's teaching concerning the narrative – Auth.
[8] On the sun's surface, there are always certain sunspots, which follow its rotational movement and which have served to determine the duration of this movement. At times, however, these sunspots increase in number, extent and intensity, and it is then that there is a decrease in light and heat. This increase in the number of sunspots seems to coincide with certain astronomical phenomena and the relative position of certain planets, which determine their periodic reappearance. The length of such darkening is highly variable; sometimes it lasts only two or three hours, but in 535 there was one that lasted fourteen months – Auth.
[9] The numerous contemporary phenomena involving healings, apparitions, possessions, second sight and others, which are reported in the Revue Spirite and recalled in the above observations, offer, even in the most detailed circumstances, such an patent analogy with those that the Gospel narrates that the similarity of both the effects and the causes becomes obvious. Hence, it must be asked why the same phenomena would have a natural cause today, but a supernatural one yesterday; diabolical for some, divine for others. If it were possible here to place them side by side, the comparison would be easier; however, the number and the explanations that most of them would require would not allow it. – Auth.
[10] Only the Jewish historian Favius Josephus says anything about it and very little at that. – Auth.
[11] See reference in next paragraph. – Tr.
[12] We are not speaking about the mystery of the incarnation, with which we do not have to concern ourselves here, but which will be examined at a later time – Auth.
[13] Publisher's note: In light of the communications and phenomena appearing after the departure of Kardec, we must conclude that it was not really a vain sham, just as there was no sham when Jesus, after his death, stated the words that are recorded in Luke (24:39), "It is I; touch me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh or bone as you see that I do."

Part three

Predictions according to spiritism

• Chapter XVI – The theory of foreknowlwdge
• Chapter XVII – Predictions in the Gospel
• Chapter XVIII – The time has come

CHAPTER XVI

The theory of foreknowledge

1. How is cognizance of the future possible? One can understand foreknowledge of events that are the consequence of things from the present state, but not those that have no relation to the present and even less those that are attributed to chance. It is said that future matters do not yet exist; they are still in nothingness, so how can one know that they will happen? Nonetheless, the examples of predictions coming true are quite numerous, from which one must conclude that it involves a phenomenon for which we do not yet have the key, because there is no effect without a cause. It is this cause that we shall attempt to discover, and once again it is Spiritism, itself the key to so many mysteries, which will provide the key to this one, and which, moreover, will show us that even the phenomenon of prediction is not outside natural law.

For comparison, let us take an example from everyday matters, which will help us to understand the principle that we are going to develop.

2. Let us imagine a man up on a high mountain, observing the vast expanse of the plain. In this circumstance, the distance of one league would seem very small, and in one glance he could easily take in all the different features of the terrain from the beginning to the end of the road. The traveler who is taking this road for the first time knows that, as he sets out, he will reach the end – a simple foreknowledge of the result of his journey. However, the features of the terrain, the ups and downs, the rivers and forests to cross, the precipices into which he might fall, the thieves that might rob him, and the inns where he might spend the night – all of this is external to him. It is the unknown, the future, because his sight does not extend beyond the small area that surrounds him. As for the amount of time it will take, he measures it by how long it will take to travel the road; take away his points of reference and the amount of time disappears. For the man watching the traveler from the top of the mountain, all this is the present, however. Now, let us imagine that this man goes down to the traveler and says to him: “At such and such a moment you will meet with such and such a matter; you will be attacked and then rescued.” He will be predicting the future. For the traveler it is the future; for the man on the mountain it is the present.

3. Now, if we leave the sphere of purely physical matters, and if through our thought we enter the realm of the spirit life, we will see the same phenomenon occurring on a larger scale. Dematerialized spirits are like the man on the mountain: space and length of time do not exist for them. However, the extent and penetration of their sight are proportional to their purification and their level in the spirit hierarchy. In comparison to low order spirits, they are like persons armed with powerful telescopes alongside those who have only their naked eyes. Among the latter, the range of sight is limited, not only because they can only with difficulty detach themselves from the globe to which they are connected, but also

because the coarseness of their perispirit veils far-off things, in the same way that fog hides them from the eyes of the body.
One can therefore understand that, according to its degree of perfection, a spirit can envision a period of a few years, a few months, a few centuries or even several thousand years, for what is one century in the face of the infinite? Before such a spirit, events do not unroll sequentially like the incidents along the traveler's route; rather, it sees the beginning and end of the timeframe all at once; all the events which, during this timeframe comprise the future for people on earth are the present for this spirit. Consequently, it will be able to tell us assuredly: "Such and such thing will happen at such and such time, because I can see the matter just as the man on the mountain can see what awaits the traveler on his journey." If it does not do so, it is because foreknowledge of the future might be harmful to human beings; it would compromise their free will and would paralyze them in the endeavor they must accomplish for their progress. By being unknown, the good and evil that await them represent a trial.
If such a faculty, even though restricted, may be found among the attributes of the creature, then how much more powerful must it be among those of the Creator, who encompasses the infinite? For the Creator, time does not exist: the beginning and the end of worlds are the present. Within this enormous panorama, what is the span of one person's life, of one generation, of an entire people?
4. Nevertheless, since human beings must cooperate in the overall progress, and since certain events must result from such cooperation, it might be useful in special cases for them to foreknow these events in order to prepare the way for them and so that they may be ready to act when the time comes. This is why God at times permits a corner of the veil to be lifted, but always for a useful purpose and never to satisfy vain curiosity. Therefore, such a mission might not be given to all spirits (since there are those who do not know the future any better than humans do), but to a few spirits who are sufficiently advanced for the task. It should be noted that revelations of this kind are always made spontaneously, and never, or at least very rarely, in response to a direct request.
5. Furthermore, such a mission may be entrusted to certain individuals in the following manner:
Without knowing about the matter, those to whom the task is given of revealing a hidden matter may receive inspiration from spirits who do know about it, and they then transmit it mechanically without realizing it. Moreover, whether during sleep or during the waking state, as well as during ecstasies and second sight, it is known that the soul frees itself and to a greater or lesser degree possesses the faculties of a free spirit. If it is an advanced spirit, and especially if, like the prophets, it has received a special mission to that effect, then during the moments of its emancipation the soul enjoys the faculty of grasping a period of time of a greater or lesser duration, and it sees the events of that timeframe as if they were in the

present. It may then reveal them in that same instant or retain the memory of them upon awakening. If such events must remain secret, it will either forget them or will retain only a vague intuition sufficient to guide it instinctively.

6. It is thus that we see this faculty developing providentially on certain occasions, during imminent danger, great calamities and revolutions, and it is thus that most persecuted sects have had numerous *seers*. Furthermore, it is thus that we have seen great commanders advance resolutely against the enemy, certain of victory; that persons of genius, like Christopher Columbus, for example, pursue an objective, predicting, so to speak, the moment in which they will reach it: it is because they have seen the goal, which was not unbeknownst to their spirit.

Hence, the gift of prediction is no more supernatural than a multitude of other phenomena. It rests upon the properties of the soul and the law governing the relationship between the visible and invisible worlds, and which Spiritism has come to make known.

Perhaps this theory regarding foreknowledge does not completely resolve all the cases that the revelation of the future may involve, but it cannot help but be useful in that it establishes the fundamental principle.

7. Quite often, whether in the ecstatic or somnambulistic state, persons endowed with the faculty of foreknowledge see events as if they were drawn on a blackboard. This may also be explained by thought photography. Since it is an event in the thought of the spirits that work for its accomplishment, or in the individuals whose actions should cause it, such thought, crossing through space like sounds cross through air, can draw a picture for the seer. However, since its fulfillment may be hurried up or delayed, depending on the circumstances, the seer sees the event, but without being able to determine the exact time. Sometimes, that particular thought might even be only a plan, a desire that might not be fulfilled; hence the frequent errors of fact and date involved in forecasting. (See chap. XIV, no. 13 ff.)

8. In order to comprehend spiritual matters, that is, in order to get as clear an idea about them as we could get of a landscape right in front of our eyes, we actually lack a particular sense, just as a blind person lacks the sense needed to comprehend the effects of light, colors and sight apart from physical contact. Thus, it is not only by an effort of the imagination that we arrive there, but with the help of comparisons drawn from things that are familiar to us. Material things, however, can only provide us with highly imperfect ideas about spiritual things, which is why we cannot take comparisons literally and believe, for example, that the extent of the perceptive faculties of spirits depends on how high up they actually are, and that they must be on a mountain or above the clouds in order to comprehend time and space.

Such faculty is inherent to the state of spiritualization, or rather, dematerialization, meaning that spiritualization produces an effect that may be compared, although very imperfectly, to that of the full range of sight of

the man on top of the mountain. The objective of this comparison is simply to show that events that lie in the future for some lie in the present for others, and they may thus be foretold, which does not imply that the effect is produced in the same way.

Therefore, to enjoy this perception, the spirit does not have to go to a particular point in space. A spirit who is at our side here on earth may possess it as fully as if it were a thousand leagues away, even though we ourselves could see nothing beyond the visual horizon. Sight in spirits works neither in the same way nor with the same elements as it does in human beings; their visual horizon is entirely different, and it is precisely this sense that keeps us from conceiving it. *A spirit compared with an incarnate is like a sighted person compared with a blind person*.

9. Furthermore, one must understand that this perception is not limited to distance, but that it entails being able to penetrate everything. We will repeat: it is a faculty inherent and proportional to the spirit's state of dematerialization. This faculty is *weakened* by incarnation; however, it is not annulled completely, for the soul is not enclosed within the body as in a box. The incarnate spirit possesses it, although always to a lesser degree than when it is completely free. This is what gives certain individuals a power of penetration that others lack completely, giving them a more acute moral vision and an easier understanding of extra-material matters.

The incarnate spirit not only perceives but also remembers what it has seen in the spirit state, and this remembrance is like a picture drawn in its mind. During incarnation, it can see, but only vaguely as if through a veil; in the state of freedom it sees clearly. *The principle of sight is not outside it but within it*, which is why it does not need our external light source. Through moral development, its circle of ideas and concepts broadens; through gradual dematerialization of the perispirit, it purifies itself from the coarse elements that altered the refinement of its perceptions, from which it is easy to understand that the extension of a spirit's faculties follows its progress.

10. It is the degree of the extension of the spirit's faculties that during incarnation renders it more able or less so to understand spiritual matters. This aptitude, however, is not the necessary consequence of the development of intelligence. Ordinary knowledge does not confer it, which is why we see persons of great knowledge who are as blind to spiritual matters as others are to material ones. The former are resistant to spiritual matters because they do not understand them due to the fact that their progress has *not yet* been completed in that sense, whereas persons of ordinary education and intelligence may be seen to grasp them more easily, showing that they possess a pre-formed intuition of such matters. For them, it is a retrospective memory of what they have seen and known, whether in the errant state or during previous lifetimes, just as some persons have an intuition about the languages and sciences that they knew previously.

11. As for the future of Spiritism, we know that the Spirits are unanimous in affirming that its triumph is close at hand in spite of the obstacles put up against it. Such foreknowledge is easy for them, first of all because its spread is their personal work. By directly taking part in the movement or by guiding it, they consequently know what they must do. Second, it is enough for them to consider a period of short duration, and in this period they can see the powerful helpers that God furnishes and who will not be long in manifesting.

Without having to be discarnate spirits, let Spiritists look no more than thirty years ahead in the midst of the generation that is emerging; from there let them consider what is occurring nowadays; let them follow Spiritism's progressive march and they will see those who believe they are called to reverse it consumed in a vain effort; they will see them disappear from the scene little by little in light of the tree that is growing big and tall, and whose roots are reaching deeper each and every day.

12. The ordinary incidents of private life are most often the result of the way that each person acts. Some people will succeed according to their capacity, skill, perseverance, prudence and energy, while others will fail because of their ineptitude; thus, one can say that each of us is the artisan of his or her own future, a future that is never subject to blind fatalism independent of the individual. By knowing an individual's character, one can easily predict the fate that awaits him or her on the path her or she has taken.

13. The events that touch upon the overall interests of humankind are governed by Providence. When something is in God's designs, it must be accomplished one way or another. Men and women contribute to its execution, but no one is indispensable; otherwise, God would be at the mercy of God's creatures. If those entrusted with a mission fail to fulfill it, someone else will be assigned to it. No mission is unavoidable; individuals are always free to fulfill that which has been entrusted to them and which they have voluntarily accepted. If they do not fulfill it, they lose the benefit and assume the responsibility for the delays that might result from their negligence or ill will. If they become an obstacle to its fulfillment, God can snap them with one breath.

14. Thus, the final result of an event may be certain because it lies within God's designs; however, since the details and method of execution are most frequently dependent on the circumstances and human free will, the ways and means may be contingent. Spirits can give us a sense of the whole if it is useful for us to be forewarned, but in order to foresee the actual place and date they would have to know beforehand the decision that such and such individual will make. Therefore, if this decision is not yet in that individual's mind, then whatever it turns out to be may speed up or delay the accomplishment of the event or modify the secondary means of carrying it out, although everything will still lead to the same result. Thus it is, for example, that by means of the whole of the circumstances, spirits can

foresee that an unavoidable war is close at hand or not, but without being able to foresee the exact day on which it will begin or the detailed incidents that may be modified by human will.

15. In order to determine the time of future events, it will also be necessary to take into account a characteristic inherent to the very nature of spirits.

Time, like space, cannot be determined except with the help of points of comparison or reference that divide it into measurable periods. On earth, the natural division of time into days and years is marked out according to the rising and setting of the sun and how long it takes for the earth to travel around it. The units of time measurement necessarily vary on different worlds since their astronomical periods are different. Consequently, on Jupiter, for example, the days are equivalent to ten of our hours and the years are almost twelve earth-years.

Thus, for each world there is a different way for measuring time according to the nature of the sidereal revolutions involved, which is why spirits who are not familiar with our world would have difficulty in determining our dates. However, apart from worlds per se, there are no such means for determining time. For a spirit in space, there is neither a sunrise nor a sunset to mark the days, nor periodic revolutions to mark the years; for such a spirit, there is only the duration of infinite space (see chap. VI, nos. 1 ff.). Therefore, a spirit who had never seen the earth would possess no knowledge of our calculations, which would be completely useless to it; moreover, a spirit who had never incarnated on any world at all would have no idea about fractions of time measurement. When a spirit who is foreign to the earth comes to it to manifest itself, it cannot assign dates to events unless it identifies with our usages, which is undoubtedly within its abilities, but which, most often, it does not deem useful.

16. Spirits, who comprise the invisible population of our globe, where they have already lived and where they continue to live in our midst, naturally identify with our habits and they continue to retain a memory of them in the errant state. Consequently, they can very easily set dates for future events when they know them; but apart from the fact that it is not always permitted, they are also prevented from doing so because every time in which the details of the circumstances are dependent on free will and contingent human decision-making, a precise date does not actually exist except after the event is carried out.

That is why circumstantial predictions cannot offer any certainty and should be accepted only as probabilities, even when they do not bear a seal of *legitimate suspicion*. Also, truly knowledgeable spirits never make predictions for set times; they limit themselves to telling us beforehand about the result of matters that may be useful for us to know about. To insist on obtaining precise details is to expose oneself to deception by frivolous spirits, who, without any regard for the truth, foretell anything and everything one might want to know about, and who entertain themselves with the terrors and disappointments they cause.

17. The manner generally employed to date with regards to predictions makes them true, often indecipherable enigmas. This mysterious and Cabalistic form, of which Nostradamus provides the most complete example, gives them a certain prestige in the eyes of the common folk, who attribute more value to them the more incomprehensible they appear to be. Because of their ambiguity, they lend themselves to many different interpretations, so much so that, according to the meaning attributed to certain allegorical or conventional words, or according to the way certain bizarrely complicated calculations of dates are made, together with a little goodwill, one can find shortly afterward almost anything one wants.

Whatever the case may be, one cannot deny the fact that some predictions display a serious character and are confounding because of their truthfulness. It is probable that this veiled manner at one time had its reason for being and even its necessity.

Today, however, the circumstances are no longer the same. The positivism of the present century hardly accommodates sibylline language. Also, predictions nowadays no longer utilize such strange forms; those made by the Spirits have nothing mystical about them. They speak the language of everyone else, just as they would have while alive, since they have not ceased to belong to humankind. They warn us about future personal or general matters whenever it might be useful, and to the degree of discernment with which they are endowed, just as counselors and friends would do. Thus, their predictions are more like warnings that take nothing from free will, rather than predictions per se, which imply an unavoidable fatalism. Moreover, their opinion is nearly always properly explained because they do not want people to use blind faith to disregard their reason, which enables them to evaluate their soundness.

18. Contemporary humankind also has its prophets. More than one writer, poet, literary person, historian or philosopher has sensed in his or her writings the future march of things that are coming into being today.

Undoubtedly, this aptitude often results from a correct judgment that deduces the logical consequences of the present; but frequently it is also the result of a special unconscious clairvoyance or an inspiration coming from the outside. What such individuals did while living they can more ably and precisely do in the spirit state, when their spirit sight is no longer obscured by matter.

CHAPTER XVII

Predictions in the Gospel

No one is a prophet in his home town • The death and passion of Jesus • The persecution of the apostles • Unrepentant cities • The destruction of the Temple and Jerusalem • The curse against the Pharisees • My words shall not pass away • The cornerstone • The parable of the murderous vinedressers • Only one flock and only one shepherd • The coming of Elijah • The announcement of the Consoler • The second coming of Christ • Precursory signs • Your sons and daughters shall prophesy • The Last Judgment

No one is a prophet in his home town

1. *And having come to his home town, he taught in the synagogue in such a way that the people were amazed and said, "Where have this wisdom and these miracles come from? Is this not the son of the carpenter? Is not his mother called Mary and his brothers, James, Joseph, Simon and Judas? Are not all his sisters among us?" And they thus made of him an object of scandal. But Jesus said to them, "A prophet is dishonored only in his home town and in his own home." And he did not perform many miracles there because of their disbelief. (Mt. 13:54-58)*

2. Here, Jesus enunciates a truth that became a proverb, which is for all time and which could be extended further by saying that *no one is a prophet while still alive*.

In usual language, this maxim applies to the credibility some persons enjoy amongst their own and those in the midst of whom they live, and to the trust that they inspire through the superiority of their wisdom and intelligence. If there are exceptions to this maxim, they are rare, and are never absolute in any case. The principle of this truth is a natural consequence of human weakness, and can be explained as follows:

The habit of being seen from infancy in the ordinary circumstances of life establishes among people a sort of material equality, which quite often makes them refuse to acknowledge the moral ascendancy of someone who has been a companion or dinner guest, someone who has been one of them, and whose earlier weaknesses used to be witnessed; pride suffers at the ascendancy that it is obliged to bear. Those who raise themselves above the ordinary are always the target of jealousy and envy; those who feel incapable of reaching the same level make an effort to bring them down by means of defamation, slander and libel; the smaller they feel, the louder they yell, thinking they make themselves bigger and that they can eclipse such individuals by the noise they make. Such has been and always will be the history of humankind as long as people do not understand their spiritual nature or broaden their moral horizon. This prejudice is also characteristic of narrow-minded and commonplace spirits, who compare everything to their own personalities.

Moreover, it usually applies to persons who are known only for their mind, an ideal that increases with the distance of time and place. They are almost entirely divested of their humanity; it seems that they should neither speak

nor feel like everyone else; that their language and thoughts must constantly be in tune with sublimity, without considering that the mind cannot stay constantly over-extended and in a continuous state of over-excitement. In the daily contact of private life, one sees much of the corporeal individual, who is no different from other ordinary persons. The corporeal human being, who impacts the senses, nearly always eclipses the spiritual human being, who impacts only the mind. *From a distance, one sees only the sparks of genius; up close, one sees the mind at rest.*

After death there is no longer any comparison; only the spiritual person remains and seems to be all the greater the more distant the memory of the corporeal person is. This is why those who have marked their passage upon the earth with works of true value are more appreciated after their death than when they were alive. They are judged with more impartiality, because envies and jealousies have disappeared and thus personal animosities no longer exist. Posterity is a disinterested judge that evaluates the work of the mind: it accepts it without blind enthusiasm if it is good, and rejects it without disdain if it is bad, separating the individuality from what it produced.

Even Jesus himself could not escape the consequences of this principle inherent to human nature, because he lived in a little-enlightened environment among people completely absorbed in material life. His fellow citizens saw in him nothing but the son of a carpenter, the brother of siblings as uneducated as they were; and they asked themselves what it was that could make him superior to them and give him the right to criticize them. Additionally, seeing that his word had less authority over his own people, who despised him, than over foreigners, he went to preach amongst those who would listen to him and those with whom he found sympathy.

One can get an idea of the sentiments that incited his family against him by the incident in which his own brothers and mother went to a gathering where he was present in order to *take custody of him*, saying that *he had lost his mind*. (Mk. 3:20-21, 31-35; *The Gospel according to Spiritism*, chap. XIV)

Thus, on the one hand, the priests and Pharisees accused him of acting in league with the Devil; on the other, he was labeled as crazy by his closest family members. Do we not see the same thing nowadays regarding Spiritists, and do they not complain that they are not being treated any better by their fellow citizens than Jesus was? What was not surprising at all two thousand years ago amongst an unlearned people seems quite strange in the 19th century amongst civilized nations.

The death and passion of Jesus

3. *(After the healing of the madman) All were amazed at the great power of God. And when everyone was amazed at what Jesus was doing, he said to his disciples, "Guard well in your hearts what I am about to tell you: The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of men." However, they did not understand such language. It was so hidden from them that they could not understand any of it and they were afraid to ask him about it. (Lk. 9:43-45)*

4. *From then on, Jesus began to reveal to his disciples that he would have to go to Jerusalem; that there he would suffer much from the elders, scribes, and chief priests; that he would be put to death and would rise from the dead on the third day. (Mt. 16:21)*
5. *When they were in Galilee, Jesus said to them, "The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of men; and they will kill him and he shall rise from the dead on the third day." This grieved them severely. (Mt. 17:22-23)*
6. *Now, as Jesus was going to Jerusalem, he took his twelve disciples aside and said to them, "We are going to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be delivered to the chief priests and the scribes, who will condemn him to death. And they will deliver him to the Gentiles so that they may mock, flog and crucify him, and he will rise again on the third day. (Mt. 20:17-19)*
7. *Then, taking his twelve disciples aside, Jesus said to them, "We are going to Jerusalem, and everything that was written by the prophets concerning the Son of Man will be fulfilled; for he will be handed over to the Gentiles; they will mock him, and he will be flogged and put to death, and he will rise again on the third day."*
However, they did not comprehend any of this; his language was veiled to them and they did not understand what he was saying. (Lk. 18:31-34)
8. *And having finished saying all these things, Jesus said to his disciples, "You know that Passover is two days from now, and that the Son of Man will be handed over to be crucified."*
At the same time, the chief priests and the elders of the people met in the court of Caiaphas the high priest, and they held council together to find a way to adroitly arrest Jesus and put him to death. They said, "It must not be done during the feast so that there will not be a riot among the people." (Mt. 26:1-5)
9. *On the same day, some Pharisees came and said to him, "Leave this place, for Herod wants to kill you." He responded, "Go tell that fox: I must still drive out demons and restore health to the sick today and tomorrow, and on the third day, I will be consummated in death." (Lk. 13:31-32)*

The persecution of the apostles

10. *"Guard yourselves against men, for they will make you appear before their councils and they will flog you in their synagogues. And on account of me you will be presented to governors and kings to serve as witnesses to them, as well as to the Gentiles." (Mt. 10:17-18)*
11. *"They will throw you out of the synagogues; and the time will come in which those who kill you will believe they are doing something pleasing to God. They will treat you like this because they know neither my Father nor me. Now, I am telling you these things so that when the time comes, you will remember what I told you." (Jn. 16:1-4)*
12. *"You will be betrayed and handed over to the magistrates by your fathers and mothers, your brothers, your relatives and your friends, and they will put many of you to death. You will be hated by everyone on account of my name. Nevertheless, you will not lose one hair from your head. By your patience you will possess your souls." (Lk. 21: 16-19)*
13. *(The martyrdom of Peter) "Verily, verily I say to you that when you were younger you dressed yourselves and went where you wanted; but when you are old you will stretch out your hands and someone else will dress you and lead you where you do not want to go." Now, he said this to indicate by what kind of death Peter would glorify God. (Jn. 21:18-19)*

Unrepentant cities

14. *Then, he began to reproach the cities in which he had performed many miracles, for they had not repented.*
"Woe to you, Korazin, and woe to you, Bethsaida, for if the miracles that I performed in your midst had been performed in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. Therefore, I declare to you that, on the Day of Judgment, Tyre and Sidon will be treated less harshly than you.
"And you, Capernaum, will you always be lifted up to heaven? You shall be brought down to the depths of hell, for if the miracles that were performed in your midst had been performed in Sodom, it would perhaps have remained until today. Therefore, I declare to you that, on the Day of Judgment, the country of Sodom will be treated less harshly than you. (Mt. 11:20-24)

The destruction of the Temple and Jerusalem

15. *When Jesus went out of the Temple to leave, his disciples approached him to point out to him the structure and grandeur of that building. However, he said to them, "Do you see all these buildings? Verily, verily I say to you, they will all be destroyed so that not one stone will be left upon another." (Mt. 24:1- 2)*

16. *Then, having drawn close to Jerusalem and seeing the city, he wept for it, saying, "Oh! If only on this day that is still given to you, you could realize what could give you peace! But now it is all hidden from your eyes. Therefore, a time shall come – unfortunately for you – in which your enemies will surround you with trenches. They will encircle you and press in upon you from all sides. They will dash you to the ground, you and your children who are with you, and they will not leave one stone upon another, for you did not acknowledge the time in which God had visited you." (Lk. 19:41-44)*

17. *"Nevertheless, I must continue on today, tomorrow and the next day, for no prophet must suffer death anywhere else but in Jerusalem.*

"Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills prophets and stones those who are sent to you, how many times I have wanted to gather your children together like a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you did not want it! The time is at hand in which your house will become deserted. Verily, verily I tell you that you will not see me again until you say: Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord." (Lk. 13:33-35)

18. *"When you see an army surrounding Jerusalem, you will know that its destruction is at hand. Then, let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains; let not those who are in the neighboring region enter it, for those days shall be days of vengeance, so that everything written in the Scriptures may be fulfilled. Unfortunate will be those who are pregnant or nursing in those days, for this country shall be oppressed with ills, and the wrath of heaven shall fall upon this people. They shall be put to the edge of the sword; they shall be led captive into all nations, and Jerusalem shall be treaded upon by the feet of the Gentiles until the time of the nations has been fulfilled." (Lk. 21:20-24)*

19. *(Jesus is on the way to his death) Now, he was followed by a large crowd of people and women who were wailing and weeping. But Jesus turned to them and said, "Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and your children; for the time shall come when you will say, 'Blessed are the barren, the wombs that have never given birth to children and the breasts that have never nursed.' They shall say to the mountains, 'Fall upon us!' and to the hills, 'Cover us!' for if the green wood is treated like this, how will the dry wood be treated?" (Lk. 23:27-31)*

20. The faculty of foreseeing future things is one of the soul's attributes, and is explained by the theory of foreknowledge. Jesus possessed it as well as all the other attributes to an eminent degree. He could therefore foresee the events that would take place after his death without there being anything supernatural about the phenomenon, which we see being reproduced right before our eyes in the most ordinary circumstances. It is not rare for individuals to state precisely the moment in which they will die. Their soul, in the state of detachment, is like the man on top of the mountain (chap. XVI, no. 1): it comprehends the road to be traveled and sees its end.

21. Such was even more the case with Jesus, who, having full awareness of the mission he had come to fulfill, knew that death by torture was the necessary outcome. Spirit sight, which was continuous in him, as well as the reading of thought, must have shown him the circumstances and the inevitable time. For the same reason, he could foresee the destruction of the Temple and Jerusalem, the misfortunes that would befall the city's inhabitants, and the dispersion of the Jews.

The curse against the Pharisees

22. *(John the Baptist) Seeing several of the Pharisees and Sadducees who were coming to his baptism, he said to them, "You brood of vipers, who warned you to flee the wrath that must fall upon you? Therefore, produce fruit worthy of repentance; and do not think about saying amongst yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father'; for I declare to you that God can make these very stones give birth to sons of Abraham. The ax has already been put to the root of the trees; every tree, therefore, that does not produce good fruit shall be cut down and thrown into the fire." (Mt. 3:7-10)*

23. *"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you shut the kingdom of heaven to men; because you yourselves shall not enter and yet you oppose those who desire to enter!*

“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisee, hypocrites, because under the pretext of long prayers you devour the houses of widows; therefore, you shall receive a harsher judgment!
“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you travel land and sea to win a convert, and after you have won him, you make him twice as worthy of hell as you yourselves!
“Woe to you, blind leaders, who say, ‘If a man swears by the Temple, it means nothing; but whoever swears by the gold of the Temple must fulfill his oath!’ How foolish and blind you are! What should be worth more: the gold or the Temple that sanctifies the gold? ‘And if a man,’ you say, ‘swears by the altar, it means nothing; but whoever swears by the gift that is upon the altar must fulfill his oath.’ How blind you are! What should be worth more: the gift or the altar that sanctifies the gift? Therefore, he who swears by the altar swears by the altar and everything that is upon it; and whoever swears by the Temple swears by the Temple and the one who inhabits it; and he who swears by heaven swears by the throne of God and by him who is seated upon it.
“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, who pay a tenth of your mint, dill and cumin, but have abandoned what is most important in the law: justice, mercy and faith! These are what you should practice, but without omitting the others. You blind guides, who take great care to strain what you drink for fear of swallowing a gnat, but who swallow a camel!
“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you clean the outside of the cup and plate, but on the inside you are full of greed and impurity! Blind Pharisees! First, clean the inside of the cup and plate so that the outside may also be clean.
“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you are like whitewashed tombs, which on the outside appear beautiful to men’s eyes, but which on the inside are full of the bones of the dead and every kind of decay! Hence, on the outside you appear to be just, but on the inside you are full of hypocrisy and iniquity.
“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisee, who build tombs for the prophets and decorate the graves of the righteous, saying, ‘If we had lived at the time of our fathers, we would not have associated with those who spilled the blood of the prophets!’ Finish filing up the measure of your fathers! You serpents, you brood of vipers, how will you avoid being condemned to hell? Therefore, I will send you prophets, wise men and scribes, and you will kill some, crucify others and you will whip others in your synagogues and persecute them from city to city, so that upon you will fall all the innocent blood that has been spilled on the earth, from the blood of Abel, the righteous, to the blood of Zechariah, son of Berakiah, whom you killed between the Temple and the altar! Verily, verily I say to you that all this shall befall this present generation.” (Mt. 23:13-36)

My words shall not pass away

24. *Then, his disciples approached him and said, “Did you know that when the Pharisees heard what you just said, they were scandalized by it?” But he answered, “Every plant that my heavenly Father has not planted shall be uprooted. Never mind them; they are blind leading the blind; if a blind person leads another, they both will fall into a pit.” (Mt. 15:12-14)*
25. *“Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.” (Mt. 24:35)*
26. Jesus’ words shall not pass away, for they will be true for all time. His moral code will be eternal, because it contains the conditions of the good that lead men and women to their eternal destiny. However, have his words come down to us free from interpolations and false interpretations? Have all Christian sects grasped their true spirit? Have none of them deviated from their true meaning as a result of preconceptions and of ignorance of the laws of nature? Have none of them made of them an instrument of control to serve ambition and material interests, a stepping stone, not for ascension to heaven but for ascension on the earth? Have all of them proposed as a rule of conduct the practicing of the virtues that Jesus made the express condition for salvation? Are they all exempt from the reproach he directed at the Pharisees of his time? Finally, are they all, in theory as well as in practice, the pure expression of his doctrine?
Since truth is one, it cannot be found in contradictory statements, and Jesus could not have intended to give a double meaning to his words. Therefore, if

different sects contradict one another, if some regard as true what others condemn as heresy, there is no possibility for all of them to possess the truth. If all had grasped the true meaning of the Gospel, they would have met on the same ground and there would have been no sects.
That which *shall not pass away* is the true meaning of Jesus' words; that which *shall pass away* is what people have built upon the erroneous meaning they have given to those very words.
Since Jesus' mission was to bring God's thought to humankind, only his *pure* doctrine can be the expression of that thought. That is why he said, *"Every plant that my heavenly Father has not planted shall be uprooted."*

The cornerstone

27. *"Have you never read this in the Scriptures: 'The stone that was rejected by those who built has become the chief cornerstone; the Lord has done it and it is wonderful in our eyes'? Therefore, I declare to you that the kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a people who will produce its fruit. He who lets himself fall upon this stone shall be broken, and it shall crush him on whom it falls."*

28. Jesus' word became the cornerstone, that is, the consolidation stone of the new edifice of the law built upon the ruins of the old. The Jews, the chief priests and the Pharisees rejected that stone; hence, it crushed them just as it will crush those who later misinterpreted it or who distorted its meaning to benefit their ambition.

The parable of the murderous vinedressers

29. *"There was a father of a family, who, having planted a vineyard, surrounded it with a hedge; and excavating the ground, he built a tower. Then, putting some vinedressers in charge of it, he went to a distant region.*
"Now, when harvest time approached, he sent his servants to the vinedressers to harvest the fruit of his vineyard. But the vinedressers seized his servants and wounded one, killed another and stoned another. He sent other servants in greater numbers than the first group but they were treated in the same way. Finally, he sent his own son, saying to himself, 'They will have some respect for my son.' But upon seeing the son, the vinedressers said to one another, 'This is the heir; come, let us kill him and then we will be the owners of his inheritance.' Thus, having seized him, they threw him out of the vineyard and killed him.
"When the owner of the vineyard comes, how will he treat those vinedressers?" They answered, "He will make those evil ones die miserably and will put other vinedressers in charge who will give him the fruit at the proper time." (Mt. 21:33-41)

30. The father of the family is God; the vineyard he planted is the divine law he established; the vinedressers he put in charge of the vineyard are those who should teach and practice the law; the servants whom he sent to them are the prophets whom they murdered; the son whom he finally sent is Jesus, whom they murdered as well. Hence, how will the Lord treat those in authority who prevaricate against his law? He will treat them as they treated his messengers, and will call others who will take better care of his property and who will lead his flock more ably.
Thus it was with the scribes, the chief priests and the Pharisees; thus it will be when he comes again to ask each one to give an accounting for what he or she has done with his Doctrine. He will take authority away from whoever abused it, for he wants his fields to be administered according to his will.

After eighteen centuries, humankind has reached adulthood and is mature enough to understand what Christ could only touch upon, because, as he himself said, they would not have understood. But what has been the result of those who throughout that long period have been in charge of humankind's religious education? To see indifference replace faith, and disbelief become a doctrine. In fact, at no other time have skepticism and the spirit of denial been more widespread among all classes of society.

However, if some of Christ's words are veiled in allegory, everything concerning the rules of conduct, human relationships and the moral principles that he made as the express condition for salvation are clear, explicit and unambiguous. (See *The Gospel according to Spiritism*, chap. XV)

What has been done to his maxims of charity, love and tolerance; his recommendations to his disciples for converting others *through kindness and persuasion;* the simplicity, humility, disinterestedness and all the virtues that he himself exemplified? In his name people have anathematized and cursed one another, and have massacred one another in the name of him who said: All humans are brothers and sisters. They have made a jealous, cruel, vengeful and biased God out of the one he proclaimed to be infinitely just, good and merciful. To that God of peace and truth thousands of victims have been slain by burnings at the stake, torture and persecution in a way that the pagans never sacrificed to their false gods. They have sold prayers and the favors of heaven in the name of the one who drove the moneychangers out of the Temple, and who said to his disciples, "Give freely what you have received freely."

What would Christ say if he were to live among us today? If he saw his representatives pursue the honor, wealth, power and luxury of the princes of the world, while he, more of a king than all the kings of earth, made his entry into Jerusalem riding a donkey? Would he not be right in saying to them: What have you done to my teachings, you who worship the golden calf, who offer most of your prayers for the rich and few for the poor in spite of my having said to you: The first shall be last and the last shall be first in the kingdom of heaven? Even though he is not here in the flesh, he is here in spirit, and like the lord in the parable he will demand an accounting from the vinedressers of the product of his vineyard when harvest time comes.

Only one flock and only one shepherd

31. *"I have other sheep that are not of this sheepfold; I must lead them also; they will listen to my voice and there will be only one flock and only one shepherd." (Jn. 10:16)*

32. With these words, Jesus clearly states that people will someday be united by one single belief. But how will this unification be accomplished? The matter would seem difficult in light of the differences between religions, the antagonism they nourish among their respective adherents, and their stubbornness in believing they have exclusive possession of the

truth. They all want unity, but they all flatter themselves by thinking that it will happen to their advantage, and none accept making concessions regarding their own articles of faith.

Nevertheless, unity of religion will be accomplished, just as social, political and commercial unity will be accomplished by the breaking down of the barriers that separate peoples, and by the assimilation of customs, habits and languages. Peoples all over the world are already joining hands, like those who are included in the provinces comprising one empire. Everyone can sense this unity and everyone desires it. It will be accomplished through the very force of things, because it will become a necessity for strengthening the ties of fraternity among nations. It will be accomplished through the development of human reason, which will understand the childishness of all disagreements, and through the progress of the sciences, which demonstrate every day the material errors upon which such disagreements are based and little by little break loose the crumbling stones of their foundations. Even though science may destroy in religions what is the work of humans and the fruit of their ignorance of the laws of nature, it will not be able to destroy – despite the opinion of some – what is the work of God and eternal truth. By cleaning out the accessories, it prepares the way for unity.

In order to reach this unity, religions will have to meet one another on neutral ground common to all of them. To do so, all will have to make greater or lesser concessions and sacrifices, depending on the multiplicity of their own particular dogmas. However, in virtue of the principle of immutability, which all profess, the initiative of such concessions will not come from the official camp. Instead of taking their departure point from above, they will take it from below through individual initiative. After some time, a decentralization movement will begin that will tend to acquire an irresistible force. The principle of immutability, which religions have always regarded as a protective shield, will become an element of destruction, because, since their creeds will be standing still while society progresses, they will be surpassed and later absorbed by the current of progressive ideas.

Instead of being a force, immobility becomes a cause of weakness and ruin for those who do not keep pace with the overall movement; immobility breaks down unity, because those who want to advance are separated from those who obstinately remain behind.

In the current state of opinion and knowledge, the religion which will someday unite all people under one banner will be the one that best satisfies reason and the authentic aspirations of the heart and mind; which will at no point be contradicted by positive science; which, instead of being immobile, will keep pace with humankind on its progressive march without ever allowing itself to be surpassed; which will be neither exclusivist nor intolerant; which will be the emancipator of the mind and which will accept nothing but rational faith. It will be the one whose moral code will be the

purest, the most logical, the most in harmony with social needs; finally, the one that is the most suitable for founding the kingdom of the good on earth through the practice of universal charity and fraternity.

What feeds the antagonism among religions is the fact that each one has its own particular god and that each claims to possess the only true and most powerful one, who is in constant battle with the gods of the other creeds and is busy combating their influence. Once they are all finally convinced that there is only one God in the universe and that in all actuality it is the very same one whom they worship under the name of *Yahweh*, *Allah* or *God,* and once they are in accord on God's essential attributes, they will understand that a sole Being can have only one will. Then, they will shake hands as servants of one and the same Lord and as children of one and the same Father, and they will have taken a great step toward unity.

The coming of Elijah

33. *Then, his disciples asked him, "Why do the scribes say that Elijah must come first?" Jesus answered, "It is true that Elijah must come and that he will reestablish all things.*

"But I declare to you that Elijah has already come, and they did not recognize him, but treated him as they pleased. In the same way, they will put the Son of Man to death."

Then, his disciples understood that he had spoken to them of John the Baptist. (Mt. 17:10-13)

34. Elijah had already returned in the person of John the Baptist. His coming again is announced explicitly; thus, since he could not return except in a new body, it is the formal consecration of the principle of the plurality of existences. (See *The Gospel according to Spiritism*, chap. IV, no. 10)

The announcement of the Consoler

35. *"If you love me, keep my commandments; and I will ask my Father and he will send you another Consoler in order that It may be with you forever: the Spirit of Truth, whom this world cannot receive because it cannot see It[1]. But as for you, you will recognize It because it will remain with you and will be within you. But the Consoler, the Holy Spirit, which my Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will enable you to remember everything that I have said to you." (Jn. 14: 15-17, 26; The Gospel according to Spiritism, chap. VI)*

36.*"However, I tell you the truth: it is necessary for me to go, for if I do not, the Consoler will not come to you. But I am going and will send It to you. And when It comes, it will convict the world regarding sin, justice and judgment – regarding sin because they have not believed in me; regarding justice, because I am going to my Father and you will not see me any more; regarding judgment, because the prince of this world has been judged.*

"I still have many things to say to you, but you could not bear them at this time.

"When the Spirit of Truth comes, It will teach you the entire truth, because It will not speak of Itself, but will say everything that It has heard, and It shall announce to you the things to come.

"It shall glorify me, because It will receive what is mine and will announce it to you." (Jn. 16:7-14)

37. There can be no question that this is one of the most important from a religious point of view, because, beyond any shadow of a doubt, it demonstrates that *Jesus did not say everything that he had to say* because it would not have been understood, even by his disciples, since it was to them that he was speaking. If he had given them secret teachings, the Gospel would make reference to them. Since he did not tell his disciples everything, their successors did not know anymore than they did. Therefore, they could have been mistaken as to the meaning of his words, or could have given a false interpretation to his thoughts, often veiled in the form of parables. Religions that are founded on the Gospel cannot, therefore, be said to

possess the entire truth, because Jesus reserved for himself the final completion of his teachings. The principle of immutability, to which religions hold, contradicts the very words of Jesus.

By the name *Consoler* and *the Spirit of Truth* Jesus announces the one *that would teach all things* and enable his disciples to *remember* what he had told them. Hence, his teaching was not complete; furthermore, he foresees that what he said would be forgotten and distorted, since the Spirit of Truth would enable them to *remember*, and, in accordance with Elijah, *would reestablish all things,* that is, according to Jesus' true thought.

38. When would this new revealer come? It is quite obvious that, if at the time in which Jesus was speaking people were in no state to comprehend the things that he still had to say, it would not be just a matter of a few years before they would acquire the understanding they needed. In order to comprehend certain parts of the Gospel – except for the moral precepts – knowledge was required which only the progress of science could provide, and which would have to be the work of time and many generations. Therefore, if the new Messiah had come shortly after Christ, It would have found the ground still unfavorable, and would not have done any more than Christ himself. Thus, from the time of Christ until now, no great revelation was produced that would have completed the Gospel and elucidated its obscure parts – a sure indicator that the Envoy had not yet appeared.

39. What must this Envoy be? By stating, "I will ask my Father and he will send you another Consoler," Jesus clearly indicates that this Consoler would not be Jesus himself; otherwise, he would have said, "I will return to complete what I have taught you." Then, he adds, "*So that It may remain with you forever and be within you.*" This statement could not refer to an incarnate individuality – an incarnate individuality could not remain with us forever, much less be within us – but it should well be understood as a doctrine, which, in fact, when assimilated, could be with us forever. The *Consoler* is, therefore, according to Jesus' thought, the personification of a supremely consoling doctrine, whose inspirer would be *the Spirit of Truth.*

40. As demonstrated earlier (chap. I, no. 30), *Spiritism* fulfills all the conditions of the *Consoler* promised by Jesus. It is neither an individual doctrine nor a human conception; no one may be said to be its creator. It is the product of the collective teaching of the Spirits, over which the Spirit of Truth presides. It does not eliminate anything in the Gospel; rather, it completes and elucidates it. With the help of the new laws that it reveals, together with those of science, it makes comprehensible what used to be unintelligible, and admits the possibility of what disbelief considered as inadmissible. It has had its precursors and prophets, who foresaw its coming. Through its moralizing power, it is preparing the kingdom of the good on earth.

Moses' doctrine was incomplete and remained circumscribed to the Jewish people; Jesus' doctrine was more complete and spread over all the earth through Christianity but did not convert everybody; having roots in all belief

systems, Spiritism's doctrine is even more complete and will convert humankind.[2]

41. In telling his disciples, "Another will come later, which will teach you what I cannot say to you at this time," Jesus was declaring the necessity of reincarnation. How could those men profit from a more complete teaching that would be given later on? How could they understand it if they did not live again? Jesus would have spoken a meaningless proposition if, according to common doctrine, future people would be new individuals, souls who came out of nothingness at birth. On the other hand, if we admit the fact that the disciples and the people of that time have lived again since then – *that they are living again today* – then the promise of Jesus is fully justified. Their intelligence, which was to develop through contact with social progress, can now grasp what it could not bear back then. Without reincarnation, Jesus' promise would have been illusory.

42. If it were stated that that promise was fulfilled on the Day of Pentecost by the descent of the Holy Spirit, one would reply that the Holy Spirit inspired the disciples, opened up their intelligence and developed within them the mediumistic aptitudes that would facilitate their missions; nevertheless, it did not teach them anything beyond what Jesus himself had taught, because one finds no trace of a special teaching. Consequently, the Holy Spirit did not fulfill what Jesus had announced regarding the Consoler; otherwise, when they were alive the apostles would have elucidated everything that has remained obscure in the Gospel until today, and whose contradictory interpretation has given rise to the innumerable sects that have divided Christianity since the early centuries.

The second coming of Christ

43. *Then Jesus said to his disciples, "If anyone wishes to come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross and follow me; for he who wants to save his life shall lose it and he who loses his life out of love for me shall find it again.*
"What good does it do a man to gain the whole world but lose his soul? Or what can a man exchange to redeem his soul after he has lost it? For the Son of Man must come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and will give to each according to his deeds.
"Verily, verily I say to you, there are some of those who are here today who will not suffer death without having seen the Son of Man come in his kingdom. (Mt. 16:24-28)
44. *Then, after being led into the midst of the assembly, the high priest questioned Jesus and said to him, "Do you not respond to me regarding what has been said against you?" But Jesus remained silent and did not respond. The high priest questioned him further and said to him, "Are you the Christ, the Son of the ever-blessed God?" Jesus responded to him, "I am he, and someday you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of God's majesty and coming upon the clouds of heaven."*
Immediately, the high priest tore his garments and said, "What further testimony do we need?" (Mk. 14:60-63)

45. Jesus announced his second coming, but he did not say that he would return to earth in a corporeal body, or that the *Consoler* would be personified in him. He represented himself as having to come in spirit, in the glory of his Father, to judge merit and demerit, and to render to all according to their deeds when the times were fulfilled.

This verbal promise: "*there are some of those who are here today who shall not suffer death without having seen the Son of Man come in his kingdom*"

seems like a contradiction, since it is obvious that he did not come during the lifetime of any of those who were present at the time. However, Jesus could not have been mistaken about a prediction of that nature, and especially regarding a contemporary issue that concerned him personally. One must ask first whether his words were always transmitted faithfully, which could be doubted if we remember that he wrote nothing down; that his words were collected only after his death; and when it is seen that the same discourse was nearly always reproduced by each Evangelist in different terms. This is obvious proof that they are not the textual products of Jesus himself. Furthermore, the meaning sometimes must have been altered as they passed through successive translations.

On the other hand, it is certain that if Jesus had said everything that he could have said, he would have expressed himself more clearly and precisely about everything, without leaving any room for mistake – as he did regarding his moral principles – whereas he had to veil his thought regarding subjects that he did not deem appropriate to delve into. The apostles, persuaded that the present generation would witness what he had announced, interpreted Jesus' thought according to their idea. Consequently, they wrote it down from the point of view of the present, rendering it in a more absolute manner than he himself perhaps had done. At any rate, the fact is that things did not happen as they thought they would.

46. A crucial point that Jesus was not able to develop because the people of his time were not sufficiently prepared for ideas of that order or their consequences, but for which he set forth the principle – just as he did for all matters – was the great and important law of reincarnation. This law, studied and brought to light in our days by Spiritism, is the key to many passages in the Gospel, which, without it, seem nonsensical.

It is by means of this law that one can find a rational explanation for the above-cited words, if one accepts them as textual. Since they cannot be applied to the apostles personally, it is obvious that they refer to the future reign of Christ, that is, to the time in which his doctrine would be better understood and would become universal law. By telling them that *some of those who are present* would witness his coming, this can be understood only in the sense that they would live again at that time. The Jews, however, believed that they were going to witness everything that Jesus announced, and took his allegories literally.

Moreover, some of his predictions did come true during their time, such as the destruction of Jerusalem, the misfortunes that would result from it, and the dispersion of the Jews. However, Jesus took his vision farther, and speaking in the present, he constantly made allusion to the future.

Precursory signs

47. *"You shall also hear talk of wars and rumors of war; but guard yourselves well against being troubled, for these things must occur. But this will not yet be the end, for you will see nation rise up*

against nation and kingdom against kingdom; and there will be plagues, famine and earthquakes in many places, but all these things will be only the beginning of pains." (Mt. 24:6-8)
48. *"Then, brother shall hand brother over to death, and father his son; children shall rise up against their fathers and mothers and have them put to death. And you will be hated by everyone on account of my name; but he who perseveres until the end shall be saved." (Mk. 13:12-13)*
49. *"When you see that the abomination of desolation, which was foretold by the prophet Daniel, is within the holy place (let him who reads this understand well what he reads); then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains[3]; let him who is on the roof not come down to take anything from his house, and let him who is in the field not return to get his clothes. But woe to women who are pregnant or nursing in those days. Therefore, pray to God that your flight will not occur in winter or on a Sabbath, for the affliction of that time will be so great that there will have been nothing like it from the beginning of the world until now, nor will there ever be. And if those days had not been shortened, no one would be saved; however, those days will be shortened for the sake of the elect." (Mt. 24:15-22)*
50. *"Immediately after those days of affliction the sun will be darkened and the moon will no longer give its light; the stars will fall from the sky and the powers of the heavens will be shaken.*
"Then, the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky and all the nations of the earth will wail and moan; and they will see the Son of Man, who will come upon the clouds in the sky with great majesty.
"He will send his angels, who will make heard the sound of their trumpets, and they will gather his elect from the four corners of the world, from one end of the sky to the other.
"Learn a comparison taken from the fig tree. When its branches have become tender and have brought forth leaves, you know that summer is near. In the same way, when you see all these things, you will know that the Son of Man is near, and that he is right at the door.
"Verily, verily I say unto you that this generation will not pass away as long as all these things have not been fulfilled." (Mt. 24:29-34)
"And it will be at the coming of the Son of Man as it was in the time of Noah, for as in the last days before the flood, men ate and drank, they married and their children married until the day when Noah entered the ark. And they realized the moment of the flood only when it overtook them and carried them all away; thus it shall be when the Son of Man comes." (Mt. 24:37-39)
51. *"As for that day or hour, no one knows it – neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father." (Mk. 13:32)*
52. *"Verily, verily I say unto you, you will weep and groan, and the world will rejoice; you will be sorrowful, but your sorrow will be turned into joy. When a mother gives birth, she is in pain because her time has come; but after she has given birth to a child, she no longer remembers the pain because of the joy that she has brought a child into the world. Thus it is that you are now sorrowful; but I will see you again and your heart will rejoice, and no one will take your joy from you." (Jn. 16:20-22)*
53. *"Many false prophets will appear and seduce many people; and because iniquity will increase, the charity of many will grow cold. But he who perseveres until the end will be saved. And this Gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the earth to serve as a witness to all nations. Then, the end will come." (Mt. 24:11-14)*

54. This portrayal of the end of times is obviously an allegory, as were most of those that Jesus presented. The powerful images they contain were of such a nature as to make an impression on still-undeveloped intelligences. In order to impress such unrefined imaginations, strongly colored portrayals were necessary. Jesus mainly addressed the common folk, the less enlightened people incapable of comprehending metaphysical abstractions and grasping the subtlety of forms. In order to reach their hearts, he had to speak to their eyes with the help of physical symbols, and to their ears through forceful language.

As a natural consequence of this mental disposition, the supreme power, according to the current belief, could not manifest itself except by extraordinary, supernatural means. The more impossible they were, the more easily they were accepted as probable.

The Son of Man coming upon the clouds of heaven in great majesty and surrounded by his angels and at the sound of trumpets would have seemed much more powerful to them than a being clothed only with moral power. Also, the Jews, who expected the Messiah to be an earthly king who, among all other kings, would be powerful enough to place their nation on the first level and to rebuild the throne of David and Solomon, did not want to acknowledge him in the humble son of a carpenter, with no physical authority.

Nevertheless, that poor proletarian from Judea became the greatest of the great. He conquered more kingdoms for his kingdom than the most powerful potentates. Solely with his word and a few poor fishermen he revolutionized the world, and it is to him that the Jews will owe their restoration. Thus, he spoke the truth when to Pilate's question, "Are you a king?" he responded, "You have said it."

55. It should be noted that, among the ancients, earthquakes and the darkening of the sun were obligatory accessories of all happenings and foreboding omens; they are found at the deaths of Jesus and Caesar, and in a multitude of events in the history of paganism. If such phenomena had occurred as many times as were reported, it would seem impossible for people not to have retained a memory of them through tradition. Here *the stars that fall from the sky* are added as if to bear witness for future more enlightened generations that this is only an allegory, because one knows now that stars cannot fall.

56. Nonetheless, under such allegories great truths are hidden. First, there is an announcement about all kinds of calamities that will strike humankind and decimate it, calamities resulting from the supreme conflict between good and evil, faith and disbelief, progressive and regressive ideas. Second, there is the announcement concerning the spread, throughout the earth, of the Gospel *restored to its original purity*, and finally, the announcement of the kingdom of the good, which will include universal peace, fraternity and the spreading of the evangelical moral code put into practice by all nations. That truly will be the kingdom of Jesus, for he will preside over its implementation, and people will live under the aegis of his law. It will be a kingdom of happiness, because he said, "After those days of affliction will come days of joy."

57. When will such things come true? "No one knows," said Jesus, *"not even the Son."* However, when the time does come, people will be forewarned by precursory signs. These signs will be neither in the sun nor in the stars, but in the social state of affairs and in phenomena that are more moral than physical, and which can be partly deduced from his allusions.

It is quite certain that such a change could not occur during the apostles' lifetimes; otherwise, Jesus would not have been ignorant of that fact. Furthermore, such a transformation could not occur within just a few years. Nonetheless, he speaks to the disciples as though they would be witnesses of it. Actually, it is that they would be able to live again at that time and

work for the transformation. Thus, at times he speaks of the approaching fate of Jerusalem, and at other times he takes this event as a point of comparison for the future.

58. Was it really the end of the world that Jesus was foretelling with his second coming, when he said, “When the Gospel is preached throughout the earth, then the end will come?”

It would not be rational to believe that God would destroy the world at the exact moment in which it entered upon the path of moral progress through the practice of the evangelical teachings. Moreover, nothing in Christ’s parables indicates a world-wide destruction, which under such conditions, would not be justified.

By leading to an improvement in people’s moral state, the widespread practice of the Gospel will, by itself, usher in the kingdom of the good and will cause the collapse of the kingdom of evil. Thus, it is the end of the *old world*, the world governed by prejudice, pride, selfishness, fanaticism, disbelief, greed and all the evil passions that Christ alluded to when he said, “When the Gospel is preached throughout the earth, then the end will come.” However, that end will precipitate a conflict, and it is from such conflict that the evils that he foresaw will come.

Your sons and daughters shall prophesy

59. *“In the last days,” says the Lord, “I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh; your sons and daughters shall prophesy; your young men will have visions and your old men shall have dreams. In those days, I will pour out my Spirit upon my servants, and they shall prophesy.” (Acts 2:17, 18; Joel 2:28, 29)*

60. If one considers the current state of the physical and moral worlds, the tendencies, aspirations and presentiments of the masses, the decay of the ancient beliefs that have struggled in vain for a century against new ideas, one cannot doubt that a new order of things is being prepared and that the old world has reached its end.

If one were to put aside the allegorical aspect of certain portrayals, and if one were to scrutinize the inner meaning of Jesus’ words, then by comparing the current situation with the times he foretold as being signs of an era of renewal, one could not help but be convinced that many of his predictions are presently coming true, from which one must conclude that we have reached the times he announced. This conclusion is being confirmed all over the globe by the spirits who are manifesting.

61. As has been seen (chap. I, no. 32), the coming of Spiritism, coinciding with other events, fulfills one of Jesus’ most important predictions because of the influence that it must obviously exert on ideas. Furthermore, it is clearly announced in what is recorded in the *Acts of the Apostles:* “In the last days,” says the Lord, “I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh; your sons and daughters shall prophesy.”

This is unmistakably the announcement of the popularization of mediumship, which is being revealed in our day in individuals of all ages of both sexes and all walks of life. Consequently, it is a prediction of the

universal manifestation of spirits, because without spirits there would be no mediums. Thus, it is stated that this will happen *in the last days,* and since we have not come to the end of the world, but rather to the time of its regeneration, one must understand those words to mean the last days of the moral world that comes to an end. (See *The Gospel according to Spiritism*, chap. XXI)

The Last Judgment

62. *Now, when the Son of Man comes in his majesty, accompanied by all the angels, he will sit on the throne of his glory. And all the nations will be gathered before him and he will separate some from the others as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, and he will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left. Then, the King will say to those on his right, "Come, you who are blessed by my Father," etc. (Mt. 25:31-46; The Gospel according to Spiritism, chap. XV)*

63. Since the good must finally reign on the earth, it will be necessary to exclude spirits who are hardened in evil and who could bring trouble to it. God has already allowed them the time needed for their improvement; but when the time comes in which, through the moral progress of its inhabitants, the earth must ascend in the hierarchy of worlds, it will be off limits as a home for incarnates and discarnates who have not taken advantage of the teachings they have been in a position to receive there. They will be exiled to lower worlds as formerly those of the Adamic race were exiled to the earth, and they will be replaced by better spirits. This is the separation over which Jesus will preside, and which is portrayed in these words regarding the Last Judgment, "The good will sit on my right and the evil on my left." (See chap. XI, nos. 31 ff.)

64. The doctrine of a single, universal final judgment putting an end to humankind is repugnant to reason in that it implies the inactivity of God during the eternity that preceded earth's creation and during the eternity that will follow its destruction. One might ask what good the sun, moon and stars will be, which, according to Genesis, were made to illuminate our world. It is surprising that such an immense work would have been accomplished for such a short amount of time and for the benefit of beings, who, for the most part, were destined beforehand to eternal punishment.

65. Materially, the idea of a one-time judgment would, to a certain point, be acceptable to those who do not try to find a reason for things, and who believe that all humankind is to be found concentrated on the earth and that everything in the universe was made for earth's inhabitants. However, that is unacceptable, since it is known that there are billions of similar worlds that have perpetuated humanities throughout eternity, and among which the earth, as an imperceptible dot, is one of the least impressive.

One can see by this fact alone that Jesus had a reason for telling his disciples, "There are many things that I cannot say to you because you would not understand them," since the progress of the sciences would be indispensable for a logical interpretation of some of his words. Certainly, the apostles – St. Paul and the first disciples – would have established certain dogmas differently if they had had the astronomical, geological,

physical, chemical, physiological and psychological knowledge that we possess today. Moreover, Jesus postponed completing his teachings and declared that all things would have to be reestablished.

66. Morally, a final judgment with no possibility of appeal is irreconcilable with the infinite goodness of the Creator, whom Jesus ceaselessly presents to us as a good Father, who always leaves the way open to repentance, and who is always ready to embrace the prodigal son. If Jesus had understood the judgment in that sense, he would have contradicted his own words.

Furthermore, if the last judgment is to catch people unprepared and in the middle of their daily tasks, along with pregnant women, one would have to ask why God, who does nothing useless or unjust, would make children be born and *create new souls* at the final moment, at the inevitable end of humankind. Would it be to submit them to judgment upon leaving the maternal womb and before they had become aware of themselves, while others had had thousands of years to do so? On which side – right or left – would such souls, who are not yet either good or evil, be put, but for whom all roads to final progress would be closed from then on, since humankind would no longer exist? (See chap. II, no. 19)

Let those whose reason is content with such beliefs hold on to them. It is their right and no one should reproach it; but let them not decry the fact that not everybody shares in their opinion.

67. By way of emigration – as defined in no. 63 above – the Judgment is rational; it is founded on the strictest justice, because it unfailingly leaves the spirit with its own free will; it does not comprise a special privilege for anyone; equal latitude to evolve is given by God to all creatures, without exception,. The actual destruction of a world, causing the destruction of the body, would not cause any interruption in the spirit's evolutionary progress. Such is the consequence of the plurality of worlds and existences.

According to this interpretation, the description *Last Judgment* is not precise, since spirits pass through similar judgments at each renewal of the worlds they inhabit, until they have reached a certain degree of purification. Therefore, there is no *Last Judgment* per se, but rather *general judgments* every time there is a partial or total renewal of world populations, and which give rise to the great spirit emigrations and immigrations.

[1] The New Testament Greek pronoun is autó, the neuter form, which in English translations is rendered in the masculine. In keeping with the Greek form and the Spiritist meaning of the pronoun, we have translated it in the neuter. – Tr.

[2] All the philosophical and religious doctrines bear the name of a founding individual: one says: Mosaism, Christianity, Mohammedanism, Buddhism, Cartesianism, Fourierism, St. Simonism, etc. The word Spiritism, on the other hand, does not refer to any one person; it entails an overall idea that indicates both the character and multiple source of the Doctrine. – Auth.

[3] This expression: the abomination of desolation not only makes no sense, but borders on the ridiculous. Ostervald's translation states: the abomination that causes desolation, which is very different. Then the meaning becomes perfectly clear, because then one may understand that abominations must lead to desolation as a punishment. Jesus said that when the abomination is seen in the holy place, desolation will also be seen there, and this will be a sign that the time is near. – Auth.

CHAPTER XVIII

The time has come

Signs of the times • The new generation

Signs of the times

1. The time set by God has come – we are told everywhere – in which great events will occur for the regeneration of humankind. In what sense must these prophetic words be understood? For disbelievers they hold no importance; to them they are only the expression of a childish, unfounded belief. For the majority of believers, they contain something mystical and supernatural that seems to be the precursor of the upheaval of the laws of nature. Both interpretations are equally erroneous, however: the former, because it implies the denial of Providence; the latter, because such words do not declare the disruption of nature's laws, but rather their fulfillment.

2. Everything in creation is in harmony. Everything reveals a foresightedness that cannot contradict itself either in the smallest matters or in the greatest. Thus, right from the start we must discard all ideas of capriciousness as irreconcilable with the divine wisdom. Second, if our age has been designated for the fulfillment of certain things, it is because, in the evolution of the whole, they have their reason for being.

Thus stated, we will say that our globe, like everything else, is subject to the law of progress. It progresses physically through the transformation of the elements that compose it, and morally through the purification of the incarnate and discarnate spirits that populate it. Both of these areas of progress accompany each other and march in parallel, because the perfecting of the habitation is in keeping with the perfecting of the inhabitant. Physically, science has proven that the globe has undergone transformations that have made it habitable for beings more and more perfected. Morally, humankind progresses by the development of intelligence, moral sense and the softening of customs. While the improvement of the globe occurs under the control of physical forces, humans participate in it through the efforts of their intelligence. They cleanse unwholesome regions, render communication easier and make the earth more productive.

This dual progress occurs in two ways: one is slow, gradual and imperceptible; the other by changes that are more abrupt, each one producing a more rapid ascendant movement which, by clear signs, marks out the progressive periods of humankind. These movements, subordinated *in the details* to human free will, are somewhat fatalistic as a whole, for they are subject to laws such as those that operate in the germination, growth and ripening of plants. This is why the progressive movement is sometimes partial, that is, limited to one particular race or nation, whereas at other times it is more generalized.

Human progress, therefore, is effectuated in virtue of a law; thus, since all the laws of nature are the eternal work of divine wisdom and foresight,

everything that is the effect of these laws is the result of God's will – not an accidental or capricious will, but an immutable one. Consequently, when humankind is mature enough to ascend a degree, one can say that the time set by God has come, just as one can say that in such and such season the time has come for the ripening of the fruit and the harvest.

3. From the fact that the progressive movement of humankind is unavoidable because it is part of nature, it does not follow that God is indifferent toward it and that after having established the laws, becomes inactive, leaving things to continue by themselves. Undoubtedly, God's laws are eternal and immutable, but only because God's will itself is eternal and constant, and because God's thought uninterruptedly animates all things. God's thought penetrates everything and is the intelligent and ongoing power that keeps everything harmonious. If this thought were to cease even for an instant, the universe would be like a clock without a regulating pendulum. Thus, God incessantly watches over the execution of the divine laws, and the spirits who populate space are God's ministers charged with the details according to the attributions corresponding to their degree of advancement.

4. The universe is, at the same time, an unfathomable mechanism managed by a no-less unfathomable number of intelligences, an immense government in which each intelligent being has its part in the action under the watchfulness of the supreme Lord, whose *single* will maintains *unity* everywhere. Under the rule of this vast regulating power everything moves, everything functions in perfect order. What to us seem like disturbances are partial or isolated movements that appear irregular to us only because our perception is limited. If we could take in the whole, however, we would see that such irregularities are only apparent and that they harmonize within the whole.

5. Up till now, humankind has made incontestable progress. Due to their intelligence, humans have achieved results never reached before regarding the sciences, arts and material well-being. There is much progress yet to be made, however: they have yet *to make charity, fraternity and solidarity reign amongst them in order to assure their moral well-being*. They could achieve this neither with their beliefs nor their antiquated institutions – remnants from another epoch and good for a certain time – which were sufficient for a transitory state, but which, after having given what they could, would be a stopping point today. What people need nowadays is not only the development of their intelligence but the elevation of their sentiment, and for this they must do away with everything that incites their selfishness and pride.

Such is the age into which we must enter henceforth, and which will mark one of the principal phases of humankind. This phase, which is being prepared at this very moment, is the indispensable supplement to the previous state, just as adulthood is the supplement to youth. It can thus be

foreseen and predicted beforehand, and for that reason we state that the time set by God has come.

6. This time, however, will not entail a partial change, a renewal limited to a certain area, people or race. It will be a universal movement that will operate in the sense of *moral progress*. A new order of things is on the verge of being established, and those most opposed to it are working for it without even realizing it. Rid of the dregs of the old world and composed of more-purified members, the future generation will find itself animated by different ideas and sentiments than the present generation, which is disappearing by leaps and bounds. The old world will be dead and will live in history, like the Medieval Era with its barbaric customs and superstitious beliefs.

Furthermore, everybody knows how much the current state of affairs leaves to be desired. After having more or less exhausted the material well-being that is the product of intelligence, one realizes that the supplement to this well-being can only be found in moral development. The more one advances, the more one senses what is still lacking, but one cannot define it clearly. It is the effect of the inner work operating for regeneration; one has desires and aspirations, which are like the presentiment of a better state.

7. However, a change that is as radical as the one being prepared cannot be accomplished without commotion – there will be an unavoidable struggle of ideas. From this conflict temporary disturbances will inevitably arise until the ground is leveled and equilibrium is reestablished. Consequently, it is from the struggle of ideas that the foretold grave events will emerge, and not from purely physical cataclysms or catastrophes. Widespread cataclysms were the result of the earth's formation; *nowadays, it is no longer the entrails of the planet that are being stirred up, but those of humankind.*

8. Even though the earth no longer has to dread widespread cataclysms, it is nonetheless subject to periodic revolutions, whose causes from the scientific point of view may be explained in the following teachings given by two eminent Spirits[1]:

"Besides the simple laws that preside over the division of days and nights, seasons, etc., each heavenly body undergoes revolutions that require thousands of centuries for their perfect fulfillment, but which, like shorter revolutions, pass through all the stages – from birth up to a peak effect, after which there is a decrease down to the final limit – in order to recommence afterwards to go through the same phases.

"Human beings perceive only the phases that are of relatively short duration, and whose periodicity they can certify. However, there are some phases that entail many generations of individuals – even successions of races – and whose effects consequently have for them the appearance of novelty and spontaneity. However, if they could look back a few thousand centuries, they would see, among those same effects and their causes, a correlation that they do not even suspect. These periods, which confound

human imagination due to their relative length, are nevertheless mere instants in the span of eternity.
“Within a particular planetary system, all the bodies comprising it react upon one another. All physical influences are in solidarity, and there is not one of the effects that you designate as great disturbances that is not a consequence of the combination of influences within the entire system.
“I will state further that planetary systems react upon one another due to the nearness or distance that results from their orbital movement through the myriads of systems that compose our nebula. I will go even further and state that our nebula, which is like an archipelago in the immensity of space, with its orbital movement through the myriads of nebulae, is subject to the influence of those it nears.
“Hence, nebulae react upon nebulae and systems react upon systems, just as planets react upon planets and the elements of each planet react one upon another, and thus successively down to the atom. Hence, on each world, there are local or widespread revolutions that do not appear to be disturbances because the brevity of life allows only for the perception of partial effects.
“Organic matter cannot escape these influences. The disturbances that it undergoes can thus alter the physical state of living beings and cause some of those diseases that generally attack plants, animals and humans. Such diseases, like all scourges, are stimuli that, out of necessity, drive the human mind to find means to combat them and to discover the laws of nature.
“Organic matter, however, reacts in turn upon the spirit. The spirit, due to its contact and inner connection with the physical elements, is also subject to influences that modify its dispositions – although they do not deprive it of its free will – and overexcite or attenuate its activity, thereby contributing to its development. The turmoil that sometimes manifests within an entire population among the people of the same race is not a fortuitous event, nor is it the result of a capricious act; its cause lies in the laws of nature. Unconscious at first, this turmoil, which is nothing more than a vague desire, an indefinable yearning for something better, a need for change, is expressed through silent agitation, and then through actions that prepare social revolutions, which, believe it or not, also have their own lifespan, similar to physical revolutions, because everything is connected. If your spirit sight were not limited by the veil of matter, you would see these fluidic currents, which, like thousands of conductor wires, link up the things of the spirit world and the physical world.
“When you hear that humankind has arrived at a period of transformation and that the earth must ascend within the world hierarchy, do not see anything mystical in these words, but, to the contrary, the fulfillment of one of the great unavoidable laws of the universe, against which all human ill will shall break.”

Arago

9. “Yes indeed, humankind is being transformed just as it has been transformed in other epochs, and each transformation is marked by a turning point, which, for the human species, is what the turning point in growth is for the individual; these crises, frequently painful and dolorous, carry generations and institutions along with them, but are always followed by a phase of material and moral progress.

“After nearly a century, earth’s humanity has arrived at one of these growth periods and is in the middle of a transformative endeavor; that is why humankind is being shaken on all sides, caught up in a kind of fever as if driven by an invisible power until it is settled on new foundations. Whoever sees it afterward will find many changes in its customs, its character, its laws and its beliefs; in other words, in its entire societal aspect.

“One thing that might seem strange to you, but which nevertheless is strictly true, is that the spirit world that surrounds you feels the repercussions of all the turmoil that disturbs the world of incarnates: I would even say that it plays an active part. This should come as no surprise to those who know that spirits make up part of humanity; that they come from humankind and must return to it. Consequently, it is natural that they would have an interest in the movements that occur among human beings. You can be sure, therefore, that when a social revolution occurs on the earth, it also impacts the invisible world; all the good and evil passions become overexcited there just as they do amongst you. An unspoken turbulence reigns among the spirits who still make up part of your world, and who await the time to return to it.

“To the disturbances of incarnates and discarnates, sometimes – very frequently, actually, since everything in nature is linked together – are added the disturbances of the physical elements. Then, for a while, there is a true widespread confusion that passes like a hurricane, but after which the sky returns to being serene, and humankind, reconstituted upon new foundations and imbued with new ideas, enters a new phase on the road of progress.

“It is in the period that has just opened that one will see Spiritism flourish and bring forth fruit. Therefore, it is for the future more than for the present that you labor; but it was necessary for these labors to be prepared beforehand, because they trace out the pathways of regeneration through the unification and rationality of beliefs. Fortunate are they who take advantage of them as of today; they will spare themselves as many sorrows as they will gain in benefits.”

Dr. Barry

10. From the preceding, one may conclude that, as a result of their orbital movement through space, heavenly bodies exert a lesser or greater influence on one another, depending on their proximity and their respective position; that this influence can cause a momentary disturbance in their constitutive elements and alter the living conditions of their inhabitants; that the regularity of their movements will determine the periodic return of

the same causes and effects; that the length of certain periods is too short to be perceivable to humans, whereas other periods see whole generations and even races pass away without being perceived, and for whom the state of things seems normal. On the other hand, generations that are contemporaneous with the transition feel its repercussions and everything seems to part from ordinary laws. Such generations see a supernatural, extraordinary and miraculous cause in what is in reality the fulfillment of the laws of nature.

If through the linkage and solidarity of causes and effects the periods of humankind's moral renewals coincide – as everything would lead us to believe – with the physical revolutions of the globe, such periods may be accompanied or preceded by natural phenomena that are unusual to those not familiar with them, by meteors that seem strange, or by an unusual recrudescence and intensity of destructive calamities. These calamities are neither a cause nor supernatural omens, but a consequence of the general movement occurring in both the physical and moral world.

By foretelling the age of renewal that will open up for humankind and mark the end of the old world, Jesus was able to say that it would be characterized by extraordinary movements, earthquakes, various calamities and signs in the sky – which are nothing more than meteors – without derogating from the laws of nature. The uneducated common folk, however, saw in these words the announcement of miraculous events.[2]

11. Foreseeing the progressive movements of humankind holds nothing surprising for dematerialized beings, who can see the objective toward which all things are headed, some of whom even possess God's direct thought, and who discern in partial movements the time in which a general movement can occur, just as one can determine beforehand the time needed for a tree to bear fruit, or as astronomers can calculate the timing of an astronomical phenomenon by the time it takes for a heavenly body to complete its orbit.

12. Humankind is a collective being in which the same moral revolutions occur in each individual being, with the difference that some occur from year to year; others, from century to century. If one were to follow humankind in its evolution through time, one would see the life of many races marked out by periods that give each epoch a particular physiognomy.

13. As we have stated, the forward progress of humankind occurs in two ways: one is gradual, slow and imperceptible if one considers consecutive eras that result in successive improvements in customs, laws and usages, and which cannot be perceived except over time such as the changes that water currents bring to the surface of the globe; the other is marked by relatively abrupt, quick movements similar to those of a torrent breaking the dikes, and which in a few years cover the space that would have otherwise taken centuries. Then, there is a moral cataclysm that in a few moments swallows up the institutions of the past and is succeeded by a new order of things that stabilizes little by little as peace is definitively restored.

Those who live long enough to stand on both sides of the new phase will think that a new world has arisen from the ruins of the old. The character, customs and usages – everything has changed. Actually, what has occurred is that new humans – or rather, regenerated ones – have appeared. The ideas of the generation that has passed away have given way to the new ideas of the generation that has arisen.

14. Having reached adulthood, humankind will have new needs and greater and higher aspirations. It will understand the emptiness of the ideas in which it had been cradled and the inability of its institutions to bring happiness; it will no longer find in the current state of affairs the true satisfaction to which it feels it has been called. Consequently, it will rid itself of its childish ways, and driven by an irresistible force, will launch itself toward unknown shores in search of new, less limited horizons.

It is at one of these periods of transformation, or if you prefer, of *moral growth*, that humankind has arrived. From adolescence it has reached adulthood. The past is no longer sufficient for its new aspirations, its new necessities. It can no longer be led by the same means. It can no longer treat itself with illusions and deceptions. Its mature reason requires more substantial nourishment. The present is too ephemeral; it feels that its destiny is much vaster and that corporeal life is too restrictive to contain it completely. That is why its gaze probes both the past and the future in order to discover the mystery of its existence and to draw from it a sure consolation.

It is in the moment in which humankind finds itself too confined within its material sphere – where intellectual life overflows and where the sentiment of spirituality blooms – that the individuals who call themselves philosophers hope to fill the vacuum with doctrines of nihilism and materialism! A strange aberration! These same individuals claim to be driving humankind forward, yet they make every effort to contain it in the narrow circle of matter, from which it aspires to escape. They bar it from the aspect of infinite life, and pointing at the grave, tell it: *Nec plus ultra!*

15. Those who have meditated on Spiritism and its consequences, and have not restricted it to the sphere of producing a few phenomena, understand that it opens up a new pathway to humankind and discloses the horizons of the infinite. By initiating them into the mysteries of the invisible world, it shows them its true role in creation, a role that is *continually active* both in the spirit state and in the corporeal. Humans no longer walk in blindness: they know where they have come from, where they are going and why they are on the earth. The future shows itself to them as it really is, freed of the prejudices of ignorance and superstition; it is no longer a vague hope: it is a tangible truth as certain as day follows night. They know that their being is not limited to a few moments of an ephemeral existence; that the life of the spirit is not interrupted by death; that they have lived before and will live again, and that from all they acquire in perfection through labor, nothing is lost. In their previous lives they find the reason for what they are today, and

from what they make of themselves today, they can deduce what they will be tomorrow.

16. According to the idea that individual activity and cooperation in the overall work of civilization are limited to the present life, that a person was nothing before and will be nothing afterward, what does the ultimate progress of humankind matter to people? What does it matter that in the future peoples will be better-governed, happier, more enlightened and kinder toward one another? Since they will not be able to take advantage of it, is not such progress lost to them? What good does it do them to labor for those who will come after them if they will never know them, if they are new individuals, who soon thereafter will go back into nothingness themselves? Under the domain of the denial that the individual has a future, everything necessarily shrinks to the petty proportions of the moment and the personality.

On the other hand, however, what breadth the *certainty* that the spiritual being will live forever gives to human thought! What could be more rational, more grandiose, more worthy of the Creator than the law according to which the spirit life and the corporeal life are only two modes of existence that alternate for the fulfillment of progress! What could be more just and more consoling than the idea of the same individuals progressing incessantly, first by being born through generations on the same world, and then on world after world, *without dissolution of continuity*, until they reach perfection! Then, all their actions have a purpose, for while they are working for the whole, they are working for themselves and for each other in a way that neither individual nor general progress is ever fruitless. It benefits future generations and individuals, who are none other than past generations and individuals who have now arrived at a higher degree of advancement.

17. Fraternity must be the cornerstone of the new social order; however, there can be no true, solid and effective fraternity unless it rests upon an unshakable foundation; that foundation is *faith*; not faith in these or those particular dogmas, which change with the times and peoples who cast stones at one another – because by anathematizing one another, they feed hostility – but faith in the fundamental principles that everyone can accept: *God, the soul, the future,* THE ONGOING PROGRESS OF INDIVIDUALS AND THE PERPETUITY OF RELATIONSHIPS AMONG THEM. When all people are convinced that God is the same for all; that this supremely just and good God cannot want anything unjust; that evil comes from humans and not from God, then they will regard one another as children of the same Father and will shake hands with one another.

This is the faith that Spiritism provides, and which will be from hereon out the pivot around which humankind will move, whatever the mode of worship and the particular creed may be.

18. The intellectual progress accomplished so far in vast proportions is a huge step and has marked the first phase of humankind; by itself, however,

it has been powerless to regenerate it. As long as humans are dominated by pride and selfishness, they will use their intelligence and knowledge to satisfy their passions and personal interests, which is why they apply themselves to perfecting ways of harming and destroying their neighbor.

19. Only moral progress can assure people of happiness on the earth by restraining evil passions. It alone can enable harmony, peace and fraternity to reign.

Moral progress will break down the barriers that separate peoples, and will bring down class prejudices and silence the antagonism between sects, teaching people to regard one another as brothers and sisters who are called to mutually help one another and not live at one another's expense.

Moreover, it is moral progress, aided by the progress of intelligence, that will join people together in one and the same belief founded on inarguable eternal truths, and, consequently, acceptable to all.

Unity of belief will be the most powerful bond, the solidest foundation of universal fraternity, which has been shattered throughout history by the religious hostilities that have divided peoples and families, making them see dissidents as enemies to be avoided, fought against and exterminated, instead of brothers and sisters to be loved.

20. Such a state of affairs presupposes a radical change in the sentiment of the masses, a generalized progress that cannot be accomplished except by quitting the circle of the narrow and petty ideas that foster selfishness. At different periods in time, elite individuals sought to drive humankind along that path, but humankind, still quite young, remained deaf, and their teachings became the good seed that fell on the rocky soil.

Today, humankind is mature enough to set its sights higher than it ever has in order to assimilate broader ideas and to comprehend what it did not comprehend before.

The generation that disappears will take its errors and prejudices with it; the generation that emerges, immersed in a purer source and imbued with more sound ideas, will imprint on the world an ascendant movement in the sense of moral progress, which will signal the new phase for humankind.

21. This phase is already being revealed by unmistakable signs, by attempts at useful reforms and by great and generous ideas that have been brought to light and which have begun to find an echo. Thus it is that we have seen the founding of a great number of protective, civilizing and liberating institutions under the impetus and by the initiative of individuals obviously predestined for the work of regeneration; that penal laws are imbued every day with a more humane sentiment. Race prejudices are weakening and peoples have begun to regard themselves as members of a great family, and through the uniformity and ease of the means of transaction, they are overcoming the barriers that have separated them. From all parts of the world they are coming together in universal assemblies for the peaceful exchange of thoughts.

However, these reforms lack a foundation in order to be developed, completed and consolidated, a more generalized moral predisposition to yield good results and become accepted by the masses. This is nothing more than a characteristic sign of the times, the prelude to what will be accomplished on a much larger scale as the ground becomes more favorable.

22. Another sign no less characteristic of the period into which we are entering is the obvious reaction occurring in the sense of spiritualistic ideas; an instinctive rejection is manifesting against materialistic ideas. The spirit of disbelief, which seized both the ignorant and enlightened masses and led them to reject, along with the form, the very foundation of every belief, seems to have been a deep sleep, the awakening from which stirs the need to breathe a more vivifying air. And where emptiness is felt, people unconsciously seek something, a point of support, a hope.

23. Believing that most people are imbued with such sentiments, one can easily imagine the changes that would occur in social relations: charity, fraternity and benevolence toward all and tolerance for all beliefs will be their motto. This is the objective toward which humankind is obviously headed, the object of its aspirations and desires, without it being fully aware of the means of fulfilling them. It experiments and feels around, but is hampered by active resistance or the strength of inertia caused by prejudices and stationary beliefs that are stubbornly resistant to progress. Such are the obstacles that must be overcome, and this will be the task of the new generation. By following the present course of things, one can see that everything seems predestined to open the way for it. The new generation will hold the dual power of numbers and ideas, in addition to the experience of the past.

24. The new generation will thus march toward the fulfillment of all the humanitarian ideas compatible with the degree of advancement at which it will have arrived. With Spiritism going forward with the same goal and accomplishing its purposes, both will meet on the same ground. Progressive individuals will find in Spiritist ideas a powerful lever, and Spiritism will find in these new individuals minds entirely predisposed to accept it. Given this state of affairs, what could those who wish to oppose it do?

25. It was not Spiritism that created social renewal; it was the maturity of humankind that made such renewal a necessity. Through its moralizing power, its progressive tendencies, the breadth of its outlook and the generality of the issues it encompasses, Spiritism is more capable than any other doctrine to aid the regenerative movement; this is why Spiritism is contemporaneous with it. Spiritism appeared on the scene at the time in which it could be most useful, because its time has also come. If it had come any sooner it would have run up against insurmountable obstacles. It would have succumbed inevitably, because, satisfied with what they already had, people would not have felt the need for what Spiritism offers. Today, born with the movement of the ideas that are brewing, it has found the ground

prepared to receive it. Owing to doubt and uncertainty, and frightened by the open abyss before them, spirits welcome Spiritism as an anchor of salvation and a supreme consolation.

26. Of course, the number of stragglers is quite large, but what can they do against the tide that is mounting except throw a few pebbles at it? This tide is the generation that is now appearing, whereas the former are disappearing with the generation that is decaying every day in large strides. Until then, however, they will defend their ground tooth and nail; thus, there is an unavoidable yet unequal struggle, because it is the decrepit past falling to pieces against the youthful future; of stagnation against progress; of the individual against God's will, because the time set by God has come.

The new generation

27. In order for people to be happy on the earth it must be populated only by good incarnate and discarnate spirits who desire nothing but the good. Once such a time has come, there will be a great emigration from among those who inhabit the earth. Those who practice evil for evil's sake, and who are untouched by the *sentiment of the good*, will no longer be worthy of the transformed planet. They will be banished from it, because their stay would once more cause trouble and confusion and would be an obstacle to progress. Some will expiate their hardness of heart on less evolved worlds. Others will do so among primitive races here on earth, which will be the same as expiating on less evolved worlds. These will bring with them the knowledge they have acquired and will have the mission of enabling these races to advance. They will be replaced by more-advanced spirits, who will see to it that justice, peace and fraternity reign.

According to the Spirits, the earth will not be transformed by a cataclysm that will suddenly wipe out an entire generation. The current generation will disappear gradually and the new one will follow it in the same way, without there having been any change in the natural order of things.

Consequently, everything will proceed outwardly as usual, but with this single difference – a crucial one: a portion of the spirits who used to incarnate on the earth will no longer do so. Instead of a backward spirit inclined toward evil and who would have incarnated in a child being born, there will be a more advanced spirit with a *propensity for the good*.

Thus, it does not so much involve a new corporeal generation, but rather a new generation of spirits; this is what Jesus undoubtedly meant when he said, "Verily, verily I say unto you that this generation will not pass away until these events have been fulfilled." Consequently, those who hope to see the transformation occur by means of supernatural and extraordinary effects will be disappointed.

28. The present age is one of transition; the members of both generations are mixed together. Standing at the mid point, we are watching the departure of one and the arrival of the other, and each is already distinguishable by the characteristics that are proper to it.

These two generations hold ideas and views that are complete opposites. By the nature of their moral dispositions – but especially their *intuitive* and *innate dispositions* – it is easy to tell to which of the two each individual belongs.
Charged with founding the age of moral progress, the new generation is distinguishable by an overall precocious intelligence and reason combined with an *innate* sentiment of the good and spiritualist beliefs – an unmistakable sign of a certain degree of *previous* advancement. Consequently, it will not be composed exclusively of eminently high order spirits, but of those who, having already progressed, are predisposed to assimilating progressive ideas and are capable of upholding the regenerative movement.
On the other hand, what distinguishes less evolved spirits is primarily their rebelliousness against God by refusing to acknowledge any power superior to human power, and their *instinctive* propensity for the degrading passions and the anti-fraternal sentiments of selfishness, pride, envy and jealousy; in other words, their attachment to everything material: sensuality, ambition and greed.
These are the vices of which earth must be purged by the banishment of those who refuse to mend their ways, for they are incompatible with the reign of fraternity, and moral individuals will always suffer a great deal in contact with them. When the earth is freed from them, people will progress without obstacles toward the better future that is reserved for them in this world as a reward for their efforts and perseverance while waiting a more complete purification to open the way for them to higher order worlds.
29. By this emigration of spirits, one must not understand it to mean that all stragglers will be banished from the earth and relegated to less evolved worlds. On the contrary, many will come back to earth because many have given in to the driving force of circumstances and examples – their outer layer is worse than their core. Once they are removed from the influence of matter and the prejudices of the corporeal world, most of them will see things much differently than when they were alive – we have seen many examples of this. They will be aided by benevolent spirits who take an interest in them, and who will hasten to enlighten and show them the erroneous path that they have followed. Through our prayers and exhortations we ourselves can contribute to their improvement, because there is continuous unity between the dead and the living.
The way in which the transformation is occurring is quite simple, and as we have seen, it is completely of a moral character and in no way derogates from the laws of nature.
30. Whether the spirits of the new generation are new, more-evolved spirits, or whether they are old spirits who have evolved, the result is the same. From the moment they display better dispositions, there is always a renewal. Thus, incarnate spirits form two categories according to their natural dispositions: on one hand are the stragglers who leave, and, on the

other, the progressive spirits who arrive. The state of customs and society, whether in a people, a race or an entire world, will therefore be the result of which of the two classes will be the preponderant one.

31. An ordinary comparison will provide an even better comprehension of what happens in such a circumstance. Let us imagine a regiment composed mostly of unruly and undisciplined men who are constantly causing disorder, and the severity of the penal law often has difficulty restraining it. These men are the strongest because they are the most numerous. They support, encourage and incite one another by example. The few good men have no influence; their advice is scorned; they are ridiculed, mistreated by the others and suffer in their company. Is this not a picture of today's society?

Let us suppose that the men of this regiment are taken one by one, ten by ten, a hundred by a hundred and are replaced at the same rate by an equal number of good soldiers, even some who had been expelled but who have truly mended their ways since then. After some time, the regiment will be the same one, but it will have been transformed. Good order will have followed disorder. This is how it will be with a regenerated humanity.

32. The great collective departures are not meant only to activate exits, but to transform the mind of the masses more rapidly by freeing it from evil influences and lending greater ascendancy to new ideas.

It is because many, in spite of their imperfections, are ripe for such a transformation, that many depart in order to retemper themselves in a purer source. As long as they had remained in the same environment and under the same influences, they would have persisted in their old ideas and their ways of looking at things. One stay in the spirit world is enough to open their eyes, because there they can see what they could not on earth. Disbelievers, fanatics and absolutists consequently will be able to return with *inborn* ideas of faith, tolerance and liberty. Upon their return they will find that things have changed and will experience the influence of the new environment into which they have been born. Instead of opposing new ideas, they will support them.

33. The regeneration of humankind, therefore, does not absolutely require spirits to be completely renewed; a modification in their moral outlook is sufficient. This modification occurs in all those who are predisposed to it once they are removed from the pernicious influences of the world. Thus, those who come back to earth are not always other spirits, but frequently the same ones, who now think and feel in a different way.

When isolated and individual, this improvement goes unnoticed and has no ostensive influence in the world. Quite different is the effect when it takes place simultaneously among large masses, because then, according to the proportions it assumes in one generation, the ideas of a people or a race can be profoundly modified.

That is what is almost always noticed after the large shocks that decimate populations. Destructive scourges destroy only bodies – they do not touch

the spirit. They activate the coming-and-going movement between the corporeal and spirit worlds, and, consequently, the progressive movement of incarnate and discarnate spirits. It should be noted that throughout the epochs of history, great social crises have been followed by an era of progress.

34. It is one of these widespread movements that is occurring at present, and which will usher in the reorganization of humankind. The increase in the causes of destruction is a characteristic sign of the times, for they will hasten the emergence of new prototypes. They are the leaves that fall in autumn and which are followed by other leaves full of life, for humankind has its own seasons, just as individuals go through their various stages of life. The dead leaves of humankind fall stricken by blasts and blows from the wind only to be reborn more alive under the same breath of life, which is not extinguished but purified.

35. For materialists, destructive scourges are calamities without compensation, without beneficial results, since in their opinion such calamities wipe out beings forever. For those, however, who know that death only destroys the envelope, such calamities do not carry the same consequences and they do not cause them the least bit of fear. They understand the purpose of such calamities, and they also know that people do not lose any more by dying together than by dying alone, because, in one way or the other, it is always necessary to come to this end.

Disbelievers will laugh at these things and will treat them as chimeras; however, say what they may, they will not escape the common law. They will fall in their turn just like everyone else, and then what will become of them? They say, “Nothing!” But they will continue to live on in spite of themselves, and will someday be forced to open their eyes.

[1] An excerpt from two communications given to the Parisian Society and published in Revue Spirite, Oct. 1868, p. 313. They are the corollary of those by Galileo, narrated in chap. VI, and are a supplement to chap. IX regarding the revolutions of the globe – Auth.

[2] The terrible epidemic that devastated the population of Maurice Island from 1866 to 1868 was preceded in November of 1866 by a shower of falling stars so extraordinary and abundant that its inhabitants were terrified. It was from that moment on that the sickness that had developed quite benignly for a few months became a truly devastating calamity. This was undoubtedly a sign in the sky, and it is perhaps in this sense that one must understand the stars falling from the sky spoken about in the Gospel as one of the signs of the times. (For details about the Maurice Island epidemic, see Revue Spirite, Jul. 1867, p. 208; Nov. 1868, p. 321) – Auth.

Explanatory Note[1]

Today they believe and their faith is unshakable, because it is based on evidence and demonstration, and because it satisfies reason. […] Such is the faith of Spiritists, and the proof of their strength is that they endeavor to make themselves better, to control their evil inclinations and to put into practice Christ's maxims, regarding all humans as brothers and sisters regardless of race, caste, or sect, forgiving their enemies and repaying evil with good in accordance with the divine model. (KARDEC, Allan. La Revue Spirite, 1868).

A strictly rational and scientific study of facts that revealed the communication of human beings with spirits, accomplished by Allan Kardec, resulted in the codification of the Spiritist Doctrine, which was systematized according to scientific, philosophical and religious aspects.

Beginning in 1854 and lasting until his death in 1869, Kardec's endeavor was comprised of five basic works: *The Spirits' Book* (1857), *The Mediums' Book* (1861), *The Gospel according to Spiritism* (1864), *Heaven and Hell* (1865) and *Genesis* (1868), in addition to the book *What is Spiritism* (1859) and a series of booklets and 136 editions of *La Revue Spirite* (Jan. 1858 – Apr. 1869). After his death, the book *Posthumous Works* was compiled (1890).

A meticulous and unrestrained study of these works will enable us to extract a number of basic conclusions: a) all human beings are immortal spirits created by God under equal conditions, subject to the same natural laws of progress that gradually lead all to perfection; b) progress occurs by means of successive experiences in innumerable reincarnations necessarily encompassing all social classes, which is the only way the spirit can accumulate the learning experience needed for its development; c) in the period between reincarnations the spirit lives in the spirit world and can communicate with humans; d) progress obeys the moral laws taught and lived by Jesus, our guide and model, who is the reference for all people who desire to evolve consciously and intentionally.

At several points in his work, the Codifier refers to spirits who have incarnated in uneducated and primitive tribes that existed at the time in a few regions of the planet, and that, in contact with other segments of civilization, were undergoing innumerable transformations – many of which were obviously beneficial for their members – resulting from the general progress to which all ethnicities are subject, regardless of the color of their skin.

In Kardec's time the phrenological ideas of Gall and the physiognomic ideas of Lavater were accepted by eminent scientists. Also, the publication in 1859 – two years after the release of *The Spirits' Book* – of Charles Darwin's book *The Evolution of Species*, containing the natural misconceptions and misunderstandings that every new science entails, caused enormous excitement in the means of communication within the scholarly community

and the general population. Furthermore, the belief that facial traits reveal the character of an individual is ancient and implies that there is an apparent relationship between one's physical and moral bearing.

The Codifier did not agree with many aspects presented by these so-called sciences. Thus, he tried to appraise the conclusions of such eminent scholars in the light of the Spirits' revelation, bringing to the discussion the spiritual element as the decisive factor in resolving the issues regarding human diversity and inequality.

In the principles of the Spiritist Doctrine, Kardec found explanations that point to wise and supreme laws, which is why he affirmed that Spiritism enables "… the solving of thousands of historical, archeological, anthropological, theological, psychological, moral, social, etc. problems" (*La Revue Spirite,* 1862). In fact, the universal laws of love, charity, immortality of the soul, reincarnation and evolution comprise new parameters for understanding the development of human groups in the many regions of the planet.

This understanding of the Divine Laws allowed Kardec to state:

The body proceeds from the body, but the spirit does not proceed from the spirit. There is no other link than blood kinship among descendants. (The Spirits' Book, no. 207)

[…] Spiritism, restoring to the spirit its true role in creation by demonstrating the superiority of the mind over matter, naturally puts an end to all the established distinctions among human beings according to bodily and worldly advantages, upon which pride alone founded castes and the stupid prejudices of color. (*La Revue Spirite*, 1861)

The privileges of race have their origin in the abstraction that humans normally make of the spiritual principle by taking only the outward physical being into consideration. From the constitutional strength or weakness of some, the difference in color of others, the birth into wealth or poverty, and noble or plebian blood kinship, they concluded that there is a natural superiority or inferiority. Upon such data they based their social laws and race privileges. From this limited point of view – for they take only the physical life into consideration – certain classes seem to belong – and really do belong – to different races. However, if they would take their point of view from the spiritual being, the essential and progressive being, i.e. the spirit, preexistent to and surviving everything and whose body is nothing more than a temporary envelope that varies like clothing in shape and color; moreover, if from the study of spirit beings proves that such beings are of an identical nature and origin, that their destiny is the same and that all take their departure from the same point and tend toward the same objective; that corporeal life is nothing more than one incident, one of the phases in the life of the spirit, and necessary for its intellectual and moral advancement; that in light of this advancement the spirit may successively clothe itself in many different envelopes, be born into different situations, then they would arrive at the crucial consequence of equality of nature, and from there, the equality of social rights for all human individuals and the abolition of race privileges. This is what Spiritism teaches. You who deny the existence of the spirit in order to consider only the corporeal individual, the continuation of the intelligent being in order to look only at the present life, you deny the sole principle upon which the equality of rights that you demand for yourselves and your fellow beings is rightly founded. (La Revue Spirite, 1867)

With reincarnation, race and caste prejudices collapse, since the same spirit can be reborn rich or poor, great lord or proletarian, boss or subordinate, free or slave, male or female. Of all the arguments against the injustice of servitude and slavery, against the subjugation of women to the law of the mightiest, there are none that logically prevail over the material fact of reincarnation. Therefore, if reincarnation rests upon a law of nature – the principle of universal fraternity – it also rests upon the law of the equality of social rights and, consequently, of liberty. (Genesis, chap. I, no. 36. See also *La Revue Spirite,* 1867)

At the time, Kardec knew only what various authors wrote about African primitives, who were always reduced to nearly complete animality when they were not mercilessly enslaved.

It was based on this “scientific” information of the time that, using other words, the Codifier repeated what European scholars described upon returning from their journeys to Black Africa. However, it was crucial that he address the issue of racial prejudice:

We labor to give faith to those who believe in nothing; to spread a belief that encourages them to behave better toward one another, which teaches them to forgive their enemies and to regard each other as brothers and sisters without distinction of race, caste, sect, color or political or religious opinion; in other words, a belief that gives birth to the true sentiment of charity, fraternity and social duty. (*La Revue Spirite*, Jan. 1863)

Moral persons are kind, humane and benevolent toward all regardless of race or creed, because they regard all people as their brothers and sisters. (*The Gospel according to Spiritism*, chap. XVII, no. 3)

It is also important to understand that the texts published by Kardec in *La Revue Spirite* were intended to submit to general scrutiny the communications received from spirits, as well as to compare their teachings with the theories and systems of thought in force at the time. In a footnote in chapter XI, number 43 of the book *Genesis,* the Codifier explains this methodology:

In the January 1862 issue of *La Revue Spirite,* when we published an article on the *interpretation of the doctrine of the fallen angels, we* presented this theory as a hypothesis, with no other authority than that of a debatable personal opinion, because, at the time, we lacked elements sufficiently complete for an absolute assertion. We put it out as a trial essay, seeking to elicit examination of the issue, fully determined to abandon it or modify it if need be. Today, however, this theory has endured the test of universal control. It has not only been accepted by the majority of Spiritists as the most rational and most in agreement with God’s justice, but has also been confirmed by most of the instructions given by the Spirits on the subject. The same applies to the origin of the Adamic race. (Genesis, chap. XI, no. 43)

Finally, one must realize that the principal scope of the Spiritist Doctrine lies in the moral perfection process of the human being, which is the reason why scientific and/or philosophical investigation and examination occupy a secondary, although important, position, considering their provisory character resulting from overall progress and improvement. In this sense the Codifier’s warning is justified:

It is true that this and other issues lie outside the moral point of view, which is the essential goal of Spiritism. Hence, it would be a mistake to make them the object of constant preoccupation. Moreover, with respect to the principle of things, we know that since spirits do not know everything, they speak only of what they know or what they think they know. However, since there are persons who might draw from the divergence of these theories an induction against the unity of Spiritism precisely because they have been formulated by the Spirits, it is useful to be able to compare the reasons for and against, in the interest of the Doctrine itself, and to support on the basis of the majority the judgment that may be made as to the worth of certain communications. (*La Revue Spirite,* 1862)

In light of the above considerations, one must conclude that in the Spiritist Doctrine absolute respect is rendered to human diversity, and it is the Spiritist’s responsibility to cooperate in the progress of humankind by practicing charity in its most far-reaching sense (“benevolence toward all, indulgence for others’ imperfections and the forgiveness of offenses), just as Jesus, our Guide and Model, taught, without prejudices of any kind as to color, ethnicity, gender, creed or economic, social or moral standing.

The Publisher

[1]**Publisher’s note:** This “Explanatory Note”, published due to an agreement with the Brazilian Federal Department of Justice (Ministério Público Federal), is intended to demonstrate the absence of

any discrimination or prejudice in certain passages of the works of Allan Kardec, which are all characterized by upholding the principles of Christian fraternity and solidarity contained in the Spiritist Doctrine.

We hope you have enjoyed this book from EDICEI. Should you wish to receive a free catalog with other available publications and products from the publisher, or wish to receive further information from us, please contact: edicei@edicei.com
www.edicei.com